



A FUTURE WITHIN REACH 2008



Regional Partnerships for the Millennium Development Goals
in Asia and the Pacific



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ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COMMISSION FOR ASIA AND THE PACIFIC

A Future Within Reach 2008

Regional Partnerships for the Millennium Development Goals in
Asia and the Pacific

Asia-Pacific MDG Study Series



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Regional Partnerships for the Millennium Development Goals in Asia and the Pacific

United Nations publication
Sales No. E.08.II.F.15
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Manufactured in Thailand
ISBN: 978-92-1-120547-3
ST/ESCAP/2501

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This publication has been issued without formal editing.

Foreword

A regional picture of progress toward the Millennium Development Goals must inevitably be painted with broad strokes. While each country prepares its own progress reports, regional overviews are constrained by the shortage of capacity and information, and by disaggregated data.

Yet there is value in these regional MDG reports. For all their diversity, many Asian and Pacific countries, particularly neighbours in subregions, share significant cultural ties and similar social and economic challenges in implementing their MDG plans. A regional report can highlight opportunities for joint and cooperative action, encouraging countries to build partnerships for greater progress. It can also demonstrate the large challenges that remain, requiring the continued assistance of international organizations, such as the United Nations agencies and funds, the regional development banks and bilateral donors.

This third MDG report for Asia and the Pacific attempts to shed light on questions that are difficult to answer. How many of the region's people are living in extreme poverty? How many children are going to school? How many women are dying at childbirth? As importantly, the report attempts to peer into the future: what will be the situation in 2015 – the target date for all of the MDG targets?

Building on previous editions, *A Future Within Reach 2008* takes stock of the significant achievements to date across Asia and the Pacific, and highlights the main gaps that remain. On the positive side, the region has an unparalleled singular record of freeing more than 350 million people from extreme poverty between 1990 and 2004. But the task of reducing and ultimately eliminating human, or non-income poverty is immense. The report therefore also includes recommendations for strengthening growth and implementation efforts, adopting suitable policies, and garnering the additional resources needed to fill the remaining gaps. Action is clearly required at the national level, but this will need to be supplemented with the information, advisory services and human and financial resources of international bodies. It is essential that development partners contribute according to their unique characteristics and strengths, yet uphold the spirit, principle and practice of uniting to 'deliver as one'.

This report is a tripartite initiative of the United Nations Economic Commission for Asia and the Pacific (UNESCAP), the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the Asian Development Bank (ADB). We are grateful for the active support of a number of other United Nations agencies. We hope that the report will serve as a useful source of information and ideas, and a stimulus for innovation, investment, and regional cooperation as countries strive to achieve the MDGs and build a brighter future for all.



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Acknowledgements

This report was prepared under the tripartite partnership of the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP), the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the Asian Development Bank (ADB). A number of United Nations organizations, agencies, funds and programmes contributed to the preparation of the report with technical inputs.

Under the general direction of Noeleen Heyzer (ESCAP), Ursula Schaefer-Preuss (ADB) and David Lockwood (UNDP), this report was prepared by a team under the overall guidance of Ravi Ratnayake (ESCAP), Shiladitya Chatterjee (ADB) and Omar Noman (UNDP).

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The report team wishes to thank the following colleagues who reviewed the draft chapters and provided valuable inputs: ESCAP – Herve Berger, Haishan Fu, Thelma Kay, Siliga Kofe, Tata Srinivas; UNDP RCC – Yubaraj Khatiwada; ADB – Kallidaikurichi Easwaran Seetharam, Myo Thant, Rana Hasan, Jacques Jeugmans, Armin Bauer, Francesco Tornieri, Christopher W. MacCormac; IOM – Federico Soda, Irena Vojackova-Sollorano; UNAIDS – Sun Gang; UNFPA – Ghazy Mujahid; UNICEF – Mahesh Patel; UNIFEM – Jean D’ Cunha, Janet Wong; UN/ISDR Asia & Pacific – Christel Rose; UN Millennium Campaign – Minar Pimple.

Comments of Mia Mikic, Pranesh Chandra Saha, Shamika Sirimanne, Hirohito Toda and Kioe Sheng Yap are noted with thanks.

Several technical background papers were commissioned for the preparation of this report. These background papers were contributed by Tarun Das, A. Ganesh Kumar, Bhanumurthy Rangareddy Nagapudi, Manoj Kumar Panda, Raghendra Jha and Keith Forbes.

An earlier draft of the report was presented to a Messaging Workshop, held on 15-16 October 2007 at Bangkok. The team acknowledges the contributions made by Zhala Hajiyeva, Graham Hassall, B. Murali, Michelle N. Domingo-Palacpac, T. Palanivel, Celia M Reyes, and Li Xiaoyun.

An United Nations Interagency Expert Consultation which was held on the draft report on 28 January 2008 provided valuable guidance to the team. Substantive contributions were received from Homayoun Alizadeh (OHCHR), Sumiter Broca (FAO), Ryce Chanchai (UN Millennium Campaign), Jean D’Cunha (UNIFEM), Sun Gang (UNAIDS), Yubaraj Khatiwada (UNDP RCC), Medeliene Moss (ILO), Ghazy Mujahid, Josephine Anne Sauvarin (UNFPA), Hiroshi Nishimiya (UNEP), Mahesh Patel (UNICEF), Josephine Sauvarin (UNFPA), Sameer Sharma (ITU), Federico Soda (IOM), Irena Vojackova-Sollorano (IOM) and Christel Rose (UN/ISDR).

The report team thanks the MDG Focal Points of ESCAP for their useful technical inputs: Tiziana Bonapace, Edgar Dante, Masakazu Ichimura, Atsuko Okuda, A.S.M. Abdul Quium, Srinivas Tata and Vanessa Steinmayer.

The report was edited by Peter Stalker and Nick Cumming-Bruce.

Administrative assistance was provided by Solada Cha-um-pruke, Metinee Hunkosol, Sopsituda Chantawong and Wannaporn Sridama.

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Abbreviations

ADB	Asian Development Bank
AIDS	acquired immunodeficiency syndrome
ASEAN	Association of South-East Asian Nations
CFCs	chlorofluorocarbons
CO ₂	carbon dioxide
DPT	diphtheria, pertussis and tetanus.
ECO	Environment Congress for Asia and the Pacific
ESCAP	Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
FDI	foreign direct investment
FORSEC	Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat
GDP	gross domestic product
GNP	gross national product
HIV	human immunodeficiency virus
ICT	information and communication technology
ILO	International Labour Organization
IMF	International Monetary Fund
ISDR	International Strategy for Disaster Reduction
JSAN	Joint Staff Advisory Note
LDCs	least developed countries
LLDCs	landlocked developing countries
MDGs	Millennium Development Goals
NA	Needs Assessment
NGO	non-governmental organization
ODA	official development assistance
OECD	Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development
PIDCs	Pacific Island Developing Countries
PPP	purchasing power parity

Abbreviations *(continued)*

PRSP	Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper
SAARC	South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation
SIDS	small island developing states
SRB	sex ratio at birth
TB	tuberculosis
TWG	technical working group
UNDESA	United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNFPA	United Nations Population Fund
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
UNIFEM	United Nations Development Fund for Women
WDI	World Development Indicators
WHO	World Health Organization
WTO	World Trade Organization

Overview

This is the third in a series of regional reports on the Millennium Development Goals in the Asia-Pacific region. It assesses the prospects of reaching the goals and targets, highlighting the potential gaps and indicating how these can be filled. It also looks at the potential for adding value to national initiatives through broader international partnerships through which the United Nations and other international organizations 'deliver as one'.

The Asia-Pacific region is an economic powerhouse, with some of the world's most dynamic economies. But it has been making slower progress with some of the Millennium Development Goals. Its greatest success has been with poverty, for which the region as a whole is likely to meet the 2015 target of halving the proportion of people living in income poverty. But most countries will miss at least some of the other targets and goals, and a number will miss their goal even for poverty.

For each of the MDGs, countries can be classified as 'off-track', 'on-track' or 'early achievers'. The targets for which the largest number of countries are off-track are: CO₂ emissions; rural sanitation coverage; the proportion of children underweight; and rural access to clean water. But the region also needs to do more in a number of other areas. Among the targets and indicators of greatest concern are:

Child mortality – Some four million children in the region die before they reach the age of five. Of the 47 countries for

which data are available, 15 are off-track and several have regressed. The pattern is similar for infant mortality.

Maternal mortality – Some 250,000 women in the region die each year during childbirth or from pregnancy-related complications. In 1990, developing Asia's maternal mortality ratio was 395 deaths per 100,000 live births, and by 2000 this had fallen only to 300. The high number of maternal deaths also contributes to a declining sex ratio, which combined with selective abortion or infanticide of girls, means that millions of women are 'missing', an outcome that has been characterized as 'gendercide'.

Climate change and environmental sustainability – Rapid economic growth has had huge environmental costs – including deforestation and the destruction of wetlands and extensive pollution of air and water. Another major problem for the region is CO₂ emissions. Of 48 countries for which data are available, 30 are off-track for meeting the 2015 emissions target. Climate change will

have a serious impact on the region – through rising sea levels and changing weather patterns. More positively, however, the region appears to be making significant progress in reducing the consumption of ozone-depleting CFCs.

Water and sanitation – Here the region performs poorly: 18 out of 38 countries investigated are off-track for providing their rural populations with access to safe water, and 17 out of 32 countries are off-track for providing rural areas with access to basic sanitation. Countries across the region seem to have made greater progress in urban areas, but in some cases public service delivery systems are struggling to keep pace with rapidly growing urban populations.

Education – Primary education is one of the region's great successes: almost all countries have net primary enrolment ratios above 90 per cent and for many the ratio is approaching 100 per cent. The region's performance is less impressive, however, when it comes to repetition and completion.

Empowerment of women – One MDG indicator of women's empowerment is their share in non-agricultural wage employment. On this basis, in some countries women are doing well, with more women employed than men. In several Asia-Pacific countries, however, women are some way behind. Moreover, even when women are working they are predominantly employed in labour-intensive, low-value-added manufacturing and service sector jobs. Women are also poorly represented in national parliaments: in many countries the percentage of parliamentary seats held by women is in single digits.

Poverty – Between 1990 and 2004, the proportion of people living on less than \$1 (PPP) a day in the Asia and Pacific region, fell from 31 to 17 per cent. Moreover, during the same period, and despite population growth, the absolute number of poor people also fell, from 1,009 million to about 641 million. Data

based on national poverty lines also show a decline in poverty. But despite falls in poverty, progress has been unevenly distributed and some countries have experienced sharp increases in inequality.

Hunger and malnutrition – Around 545 million people in Asia and the Pacific are consuming less than the global standard of 2,200 calories per day – constituting 65 per cent of the world's undernourished. There has been some progress, and both the total number and the prevalence of undernourished people have fallen, but not fast enough to keep the region on track for the MDG goal of halving the undernourished population by 2015. Even more disturbing, 28 per cent of under-5 children are underweight: the region accounts for around two-thirds of the world's underweight children and is considerably behind its target for 2015.

Communicable diseases – Across the region, HIV remains a major concern: 6 million people are infected with the virus. Although the prevalence, at 0.3 per cent, is lower than in some other world regions, it is still some way from meeting the MDG goal of halting and reversing the spread of the pandemic by 2015. In addition, large numbers of people are infected by malaria and tuberculosis. The Pacific subregion is hit hard by non communicable diseases which is a major public health problem. Asia-Pacific region also has two of every three people in the world infected with TB.

Global cooperation – The eighth Millennium Development Goal calls for global cooperation through official development assistance (ODA), debt sustainability and international trade. In 2005, only five countries had lived up to the developed country pledge that ODA should constitute at least 0.7 per cent of their gross national income. Nevertheless the volume of aid has increased: between 1990 and 2005, global flows of ODA rose from \$23 billion to \$44 billion. Goal 8 also recognizes the importance of international trade. In

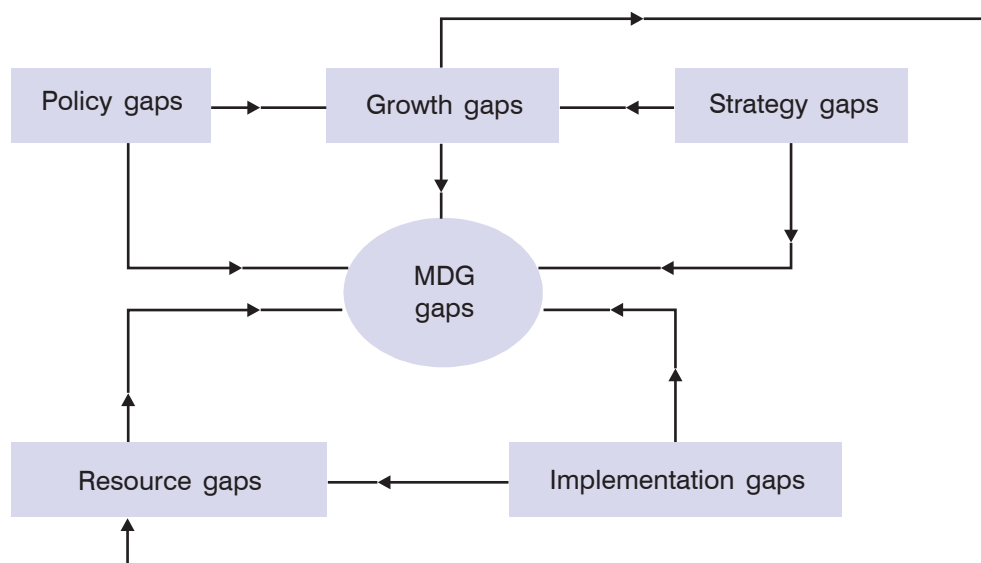
1996, Asia-Pacific LDCs had the same level of duty-free access as sub-Saharan LDCs but by the late 1990s and early 2000s, their share of trade had declined. Goal 8 also calls for decent and productive work for youth, but that task remains largely unfulfilled: youth unemployment is on the rise almost everywhere, including the Pacific subregion.

Another disturbing aspect of the region's uneven MDG progress is the ex-

tent of disparities within and between countries. Within countries, the poor and vulnerable groups, particularly those living in rural and remote areas are falling further behind.

The region as a whole is thus likely to fall short in a number of ways – facing critical 'MDG gaps': growth gaps, strategy gaps, policy gaps, implementation gaps, and resource gaps. Figure below illustrates the interplay between these.

Figure – Five interrelated gaps for achieving the MDGS



Filling the MDG gaps

One way of attempting to fill the gaps would be to increase economic growth. An analysis of 25 countries across the region suggests that this would have the most effect on income poverty: if per capita GDP rises by 1 per cent, the headcount poverty ratio tends to fall by 0.86 per cent. Growth has less effect on undernutrition: a 1 per cent increase in per capita GDP is associated with a drop of about half a per cent in undernutrition. Growth also appears to have a smaller effect on infant and under-5 mortality and on maternal mortality. Countries that rely only economic growth are thus likely to fall short.

Even in the unlikely event, they boosted their projected per capita GDP growth by 3 percentage points, many countries would remain off-track. To achieve the goals they will need to improve the structure and quality of economic growth and make appropriate changes to national development strategies.

To what extent are they making such changes? To assess current strategies, this report carried out a review of 14 Asia-Pacific countries. This showed that, while all countries had distinctive features they generally took a common approach. All emphasized the importance of stable, broad-based, inclusive and participatory economic growth. They also engaged in a wide range of policies, reforms and programmes –

which can be grouped under 9 broad headings:

- Sustaining macroeconomic stability and macro liberalization
- Structural reforms in trade, industry, land, labour and capital markets
- Sectoral priorities for poverty reduction and employment generation
- Development of physical infrastructure and human capital
- Conflict resolution, social development and environmental protection
- Direct poverty alleviation programmes
- Improving legal and institutional frameworks
- External aid coordination and harmonization
- Strengthening systems for measurement, evaluation, monitoring and review

To date, countries have loosely adopted MDGs to fill national budget constraints and priorities. To be effective, however, national MDG strategies should be 'need based', setting out national targets and priorities that are consistent with reaching the MDGs.

Good governance

The effectiveness of all of these activities will also depend critically on the quality of governance. The Millennium Declaration, which gave rise to the Millennium Development Goals, stresses the importance of good governance which while increasing efficiency and transparency generally also involves incorporating the views of minorities, those facing discriminations and those most vulnerable – empowering them to become agents of their own development. At the national level, this means, for example, cutting through the bureaucratic jungle of laws, and devising more effective forms of service delivery. However, in many cases governments will also need to decentralize power and authority from higher to lower tiers –

and broaden the range of service providers to include community organizations, non-governmental organizations and the private sector. Governments will always retain their fundamental responsibility of ensuring that everyone has access to basic services at all times, but in some cases they can concentrate more on creating a suitable environment – encouraging the involvement of a range of providers, while setting standards and carrying out functions of regulation and monitoring.

Macroeconomic policies

Raising standards of governance will also assist countries in their efforts to achieve 'pro-poor' growth. For this they can use four groups of policies:

Economy-wide institutional and policy reforms – The aim is to exploit the country's comparative advantages – increasing exports and attracting foreign capital, especially foreign direct investment. Typically this has implied a standard set of policies: privatization, deregulation, liberalization of trade and the financial sector and capital account convertibility. While these policies have their place, they need to be phased in with care since, in the short to medium term at least, such policies can also harm the poor.

Macroeconomic stabilization policies – Governments pursuing macroeconomic stabilization are generally aiming for low inflation. However, efforts to control inflation through reducing fiscal deficit can easily restrain short- and medium-term growth. Often a better approach is to focus on supply management ensuring sufficient goods at reasonable prices for the poor.

Sectoral policies and interventions – One of the priority areas for poverty reduction is agriculture and rural development. Interventions needed include investments in rural infrastructure, irrigation networks, farm-to-market roads and rural electrification. Other pro-poor sectors include construction and light manufacturing.

Pro-poor expenditures and revenue policies – To improve the position of the poor, governments will need to change the structure of taxes, correct pro-rich subsidies and allocate public expenditure so as to increase the availability of services.

If these policies to foster growth are accompanied by improvements in both physical and social infrastructure – ‘MDG goods and services’ – they will help achieve the Goals. This should be self-reinforcing process: expansion in the MDG goods and services sectors can also act an engine of growth, turning ‘pro-MDG growth’ into ‘pro-growth MDGs’.

To what extent have governments been pursuing pro-MDG growth? An analysis has been carried out for 28 countries, using China and Thailand as benchmarks. The scale of the task facing each country is assessed by considering how far it is from the benchmark. On the basis of this analysis, the areas in need of attention are finance, the macro-economy, education and trade and health. These 5 areas thus represent a menu for any regional assistance strategy.

Filling the implementation gap

Slow progress towards achieving MDGs is often due to a gap between commitment and implementation. First, governments need to back the MDGs fully at national and international levels, estimating the costs, prioritizing public expenditures, setting out achievable targets, establishing clear timelines and devising practical strategies. Second, they will have to break out of the limited sectoral approach, to encompass a more integrated framework of policies. Finally, they should institute systems for continuous results monitoring and evaluation to ensure that implementation remains on track and that some goals are not pursued at the expense of others.

A critical step in devising MDG policies is making realistic estimates of the costs so that these can be fully incorporated into national budgets. One major effort

to measure this at the national level has been undertaken by UNDP: the MDG Needs Assessment (NA). This shows that costs can vary considerably from country to country, from a low of \$45 per capita per year for Nepal to \$321 per capita per year for Mongolia. Based on the costings made thus far, it is possible to make a rough estimate of the MDG resource gap for the group of all least developed countries in Asia and the Pacific. On this basis, the total requirement to 2015 is \$241 per capita per year, or \$66 billion in total. Since currently the available resources are around \$212 per capita per year or \$58 billion, the resource gap is thus \$8 billion, per year, or \$29 per person per year.

Following a regional road map

The primary and ultimate responsibility for achieving the MDGs lies with national governments and organizations. But they need not act in isolation. They should also be able to count on the support of international organizations – the agencies and funds of the United Nations, the regional development banks and the bilateral donors. For this assistance to be effective, however, it should be offered in clear and coordinated fashion. For this purpose the outline of ‘regional road map’ was presented in May 2007 to the sixty-third session of the ESCAP Commission where it received widespread endorsement.

This road map identifies priority areas where progress towards MDGs is slow or lacking. Then it lays out a strategy with a number of products and services that can be delivered by the regional partnership. Finally, it establishes processes of monitoring and evaluation to allow for ‘course corrections’.

The 5 components of the road map are: knowledge and capacity-building, expertise, advocacy, regional public goods and resources. All should add value to national strategies and be de-

veloped in consultation with national stakeholders. The framework is designed to be dynamic; as time goes on each component is expected to highlight different priorities and emphases.

Knowledge and capacity-building

With their normative and analytical research capabilities, the regional partners can achieve significant economies of scale in accumulating and organizing knowledge and information. The partners can use this information to identify opportunities for regional and sub-regional cooperation, and areas and sectors for public-private-donor investments and interventions. This should ensure that policy makers, experts and professionals are well informed and better able to use public and private resources, including development assistance.

The end result could be a regional MDG knowledge hub under which a range of activities, including monitoring progress, examining national plans, assessing resources, and carrying out modelling and costing exercises could be conducted. While these activities are likely to be undertaken by different agencies, their coordination through a regional mechanism could provide a one-stop shop.

Expertise

This would cover, for example, advice on projects involving water and sanitation, transport and communications, tackling HIV/AIDS, delivering child-health services, building micro-credit institutions, developing new services in the financial system for small and medium-sized enterprises, improving trade intelligence and facilitation, disaggregating statistics and implementing gender strategies.

One option for improving the delivery of expertise would be to create a coordinated regional advisory service mechanism. This could serve as a source of experts who could augment, local ex-

pertise, particularly for complex projects. Advisers could also help build national capacity and disseminate up-to-date knowledge and information, through research studies and papers, online consultations, and by participating in national, regional and international meetings.

Advocacy

There is always the danger that the MDG process will become fragmented and lose momentum. The partnership will therefore need a strong advocacy component. This can be promoted through a series of regional and subregional MDG forums to create opportunities for different kinds of networking, allowing governments, international organizations, NGOs and representatives of community organizations to form new alliances and work together more effectively.

This could include parliamentary forums. With the support of training and orientation programmes, parliamentarians, both men and women, should be better able to formulate the necessary legislation and policy in compliance with international treaties.

Regional public goods

While most public goods are nationally based, a number, such as energy and transport infrastructures, have strong international elements and can be strengthened by regional cooperation. A regional partnership can play a supportive role in all these issues, for example in formulating agreements and treaties on cross-border issues, and promoting cross-country campaigns such as those for green growth.

Resources

The least developed countries in particular are likely to remain dependent on external aid for the foreseeable future. The proposed regional MDG forums might therefore incorporate regional donor forums to exchange information and

data. Beyond development assistance, the developing countries should also be able to benefit from increased trade, so partnerships should also be aiming to ensure easier market access for goods from the LDCs especially agricultural exports.

These initiatives will depend on the availability of resources, both internal and external. One significant recent step in this direction has been the creation of the UNDP-Spanish Millennium Development Goal Achievement Fund, but given the scale of the needs further innovations will be required, giving priority to LDC and LLDC 'off-track' countries and to those critical MDGs in which the region or subregions appear to be faltering.

Delivering as one

United Nations and other organizations need to work more closely together across the Asia-Pacific. When offering resources and expertise in support of national efforts to achieve the MDGs they should therefore aim to 'deliver as one'. This not only simplifies the task of overstretched national administrators it also avoids overlap and makes international support more coherent and effective. This type of coordinated activity, for example, through the United Nations Regional Coordination Meeting and the ESCAP Commission, becomes ever more urgent with the approach of the target year of 2015. The Asia-Pacific region still has a lengthy and urgent MDG agenda, and time is running out.

1. Tracking the Goals

Over the past two decades, the Asia-Pacific region has taken remarkable strides in accelerating economic growth and reducing poverty. But progress in other areas of human development has been less impressive. This chapter tracks the progress to date for some of the most important targets – and assesses what needs to be done to meet the Millennium Development Goals.

The Asia-Pacific region is an economic powerhouse, with some of the world's most dynamic economies. But it has been making slower progress with some of the Millennium Development Goals (Box 1-1). Its greatest success has been with poverty, for which the region as a whole is on 'on track' to meet the 2015 targets of halving the proportion of people living in extreme poverty. But for the other goals, many more countries are off-track and a number of countries will miss their goal even for poverty.

Unless the region can accelerate progress and achieve the MDGs, its people will face immense social costs. Some 641 million people will continue to live on less than \$1 a day. Around 97 million children will remain underweight. Four million children will die each year before reaching the age of five. Four hundred million people in urban areas will have no access to basic sanitation, and a further 566 million people living in rural areas will lack access to clean water.

This outcome is avoidable. Governments should now be in a better position to capitalize on their strengths, knowledge and expertise and adopt appropriate economic and social policies. They can work with neighbouring countries on cross-border issues. And they can also rely on support from the United Nations, its specialized agencies and regional banks. With determined national efforts and consistent and effective backing from international organizations pooling their resources and working 'as one', the Millennium Development Goals are still within reach.

This report explores how to address the main gaps and constraints. It has three chapters. Chapter 1 tracks progress to date, assessing whether countries are on or off-track. Chapter 2 looks at the extent to which economic growth can help move countries towards the goals – concluding that they will need to complement economic growth with vigorous economic and social policies. Chapter 3 explores the opportunities for regional partnerships, following a road

Box 1-1 – The Millennium Development Goals

There are eight Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and corresponding targets, most of which are to be achieved between 1990 and 2015.

1. *Eradicate extreme poverty and hunger*

- Halve the proportion of people whose income is less than 1 dollar a day
- Halve the proportion of people who suffer from hunger

2. *Achieve universal primary education*

- Ensure that children everywhere, boys and girls alike, will be able to complete a full course of primary schooling

3. *Promote gender equality and empower women*

- Eliminate gender disparity in primary and secondary education

4. *Reduce child mortality*

- Reduce by two-thirds the under-5 mortality rate

5. *Improve maternal health*

- Reduce by three quarters the maternal mortality ratio.
- Achieve universal access to reproductive health

6. *Combat HIV/AIDS, malaria, and other diseases*

- Halt and begin to reverse the spread of HIV/AIDS

- Halt and begin to reverse the incidence of malaria and other major diseases

7. *Ensure environmental sustainability*

- Integrate the principles of sustainable development into country policies and programmes; reverse loss of environmental resources
- Halve the proportion of people without sustainable access to safe drinking water and basic sanitation.
- By 2020, achieve a significant improvement in the lives of at least 100 million slum-dwellers

8. *Develop a global partnership for development*

- Develop further an open trading and financial system that is rule based, predictable and non-discriminatory
- Address the special needs of the least developed countries. This includes tariff and quota free access for their exports, enhanced programmes of debt relief, and more generous official development assistance
- Address the special needs of landlocked and small island developing States
- In cooperation with pharmaceutical companies, provide access to affordable essential drugs in developing countries
- In cooperation with the private sector, make available the benefits of new technologies, especially information and communications

map that covers capacity-building, expertise, advocacy, regional public goods and resources.

Progress towards the MDGs

The Asia-Pacific region has been moving ahead on the MDGs but progress has been uneven (ESCAP/ADB/UNDP, 2007). On the positive side, between 1990 and 2004 it reduced the number of people living in extreme income poverty to from 1.9 billion to 641 million – due mainly to rapid reductions in South-East Asia and China. Health too has improved: more children are surviving beyond the age of five. There have also been significant advances in education. Millions more children are now going to school; indeed many countries have achieved almost 100 per cent net primary school enrolment. In addition, the region has taken steps towards gender equality both in schools and in the workplace.

Just eight years away from 2015, however, there are still significant challenges. Despite the poverty achievements, the Asia-Pacific region is still home to more than half of the world's people living on less than \$1 a day. Other areas of concern include disturbing levels of infant and maternal mortality, high school drop-out rates, the spread of HIV/AIDS, low coverage of water and sanitation, the loss of forest cover with serious implications for climate change, and weaknesses in systems of social protection. Moreover throughout the region women continue to face discrimination in their homes and communities and many suffer harsh working conditions. While the MDGs are common to all countries, they also present particular challenges in the Pacific Island Developing Countries (Box 1-2).

Another disturbing aspect of the region's MDG progress is the extent of disparities within and between countries. Within countries, the poor and vulner-

able groups, particularly those people living in rural and remote areas are falling further behind.

This chapter looks at the MDG targets and indicators of greatest concern. It uses the revised series of MDG data issued in August 2007 by the United Nations Statistics Division, UNDESA. For regional and subregional averages it uses those in the *MDG Progress Report 2007*, (ESCAP/ADB/UNDP, 2007), which classified countries into four categories:

- *Early achievers*- which have already achieved the 2015 target
- *On track* – expected to reach the target by 2015
- *Off-track slow* – expected to reach the target, but after 2015
- *Off-track slow/regressing* – showing slow progress or slipping backwards.

Figure 1-1 presents an overall assessment, ranking the indicators according to the percentage of countries off-track. At the top, and in greatest need of attention, are: CO₂ emissions (63 per cent of countries off-track), rural sanitation (53 per cent), underweight children (47 per cent), rural access to clean water (47 per cent), forest cover (45 per cent), reaching grade five (40 per cent), gender parity in tertiary education (38 per cent), under-five mortality (36 per cent) and \$1-a-day poverty (32 per cent). It should be noted, however, that this is only a partial picture. For example, due to a lack of data under Goal 3 on gender equality, the analysis covered only one of the indicators.

Another way of aggregating the data is to consider the number of people affected (Figure 1-2). This produces a slightly different ranking: the areas of greatest deprivation are: access to sanitation; income poverty; and access to clean water in rural areas. Also of major concern are the number of deaths of women and children – avoidable deaths that are totally unacceptable.

Box 1-2 – Implementing the MDGs in the Pacific Island Developing Countries

Of the five subregions of ESCAP, the success of Pacific Island Developing Countries (PIDCs) in implementing the MDGs has been less impressive. There has been some progress and the subregion has already met some targets, for example, on tuberculosis, the areas of environment brought under protection, CO₂ emissions and CFC consumption. It also is expected to meet the target for gender parity in secondary schools. However, the subregion has yet to make progress on the other 17 MDG targets. For Goal 6, for example, the subregion is off-track for treatment of HIV/AIDS and malaria, and for Goal 7 it is regressing for access to water and sanitation. The PIDCs may eventually achieve some of the other goals, but only after 2015, as current progress is slow or slipping into reverse. It should also be pointed out that for some targets it is difficult to track progress because of a lack of data.

Part of the problem for the PIDCs is slow economic growth. In 2006 for example the estimated average economic growth rate for the PIDCs was 3.8 per cent, which compares with a 7.9 per cent average for the developing economies of ESCAP. And even this modest growth has not been translated into improved standards of living for sizeable segments of PIDC populations. Population growth is outstripping the capacity to generate employment and many countries look to emigration to provide the relief. Poverty is increasing both in the burgeoning urban centres and in depopulated rural areas.

Another key constraint is the shortage of capacity for management and implementation. This in turn stems from a lack of will and skills. Other problems include shortages of finances, and low levels of education and skill in the workforce.

The PIDCs will need to find better ways of integrating the MDGs in national sustainable development strategies. This will mean, for example, costing MDG activities, including both financial and human resource contributions, and incorporating these into national budgets. Current government budgeting practice in most of these countries is based on outputs – on delivering certain quantities and types of services. It would be better if budgeting instead were based on outcomes – on identifiable long-term improvements in standards, though this will take some time to achieve.

PIDCs will also need to improve data collection and monitoring, and establish regular reporting systems, following standard formats – though some MDG indicators such as the proportion of the population below \$1 per day need to be defined in the context of the PIDCs to make them more meaningful and relevant. Surveys should also include data disaggregated below the household level so that they accurately reflect the lives of women and children. Both the PopGIS and DevInfo database software packages have proved effective; they are complementary and will be used throughout the PIDC subregion.

Figure 1-1 – Proportion of countries on and off-track, 2007

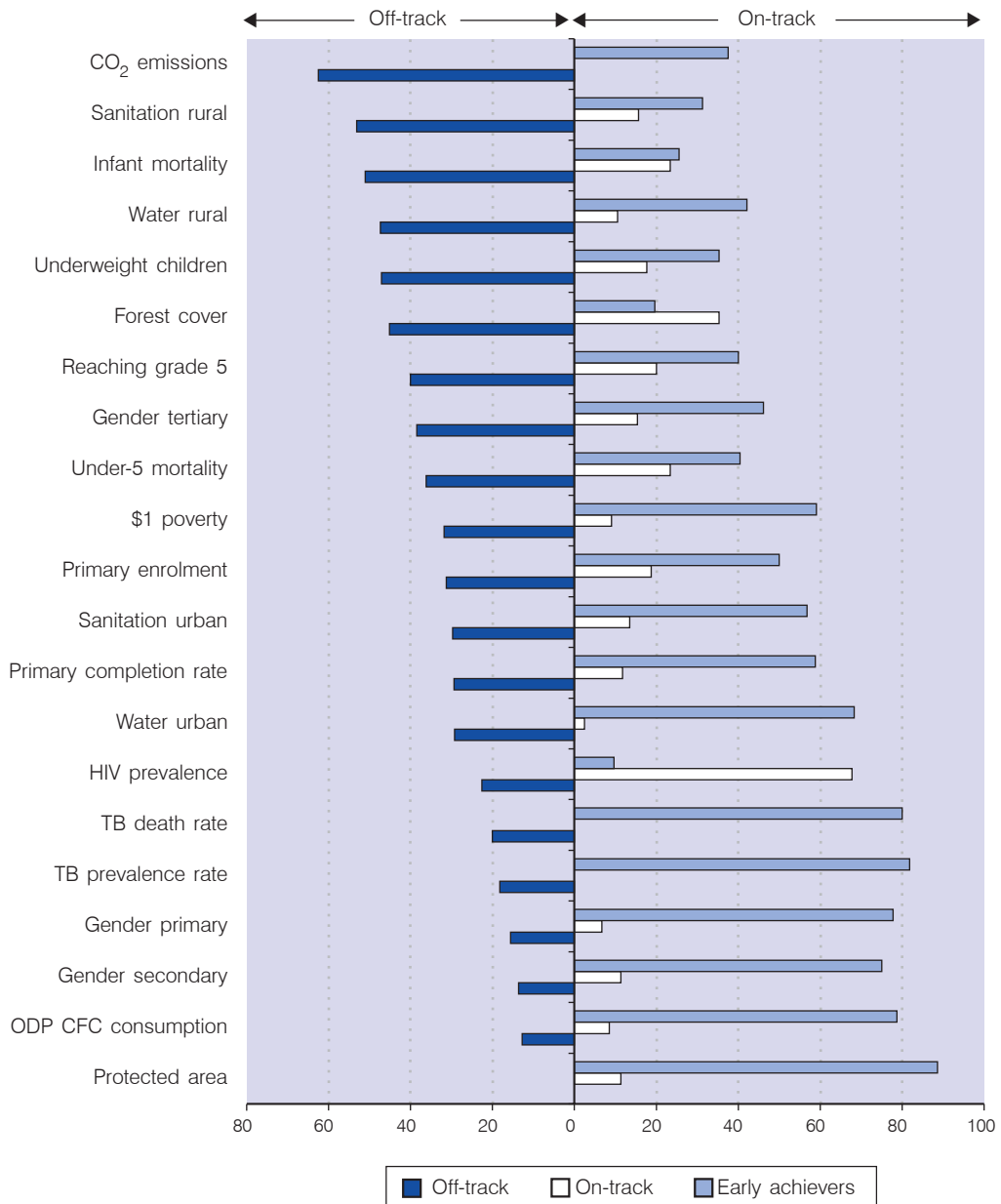


Figure 1-2 – Number of people deprived, selected indicators

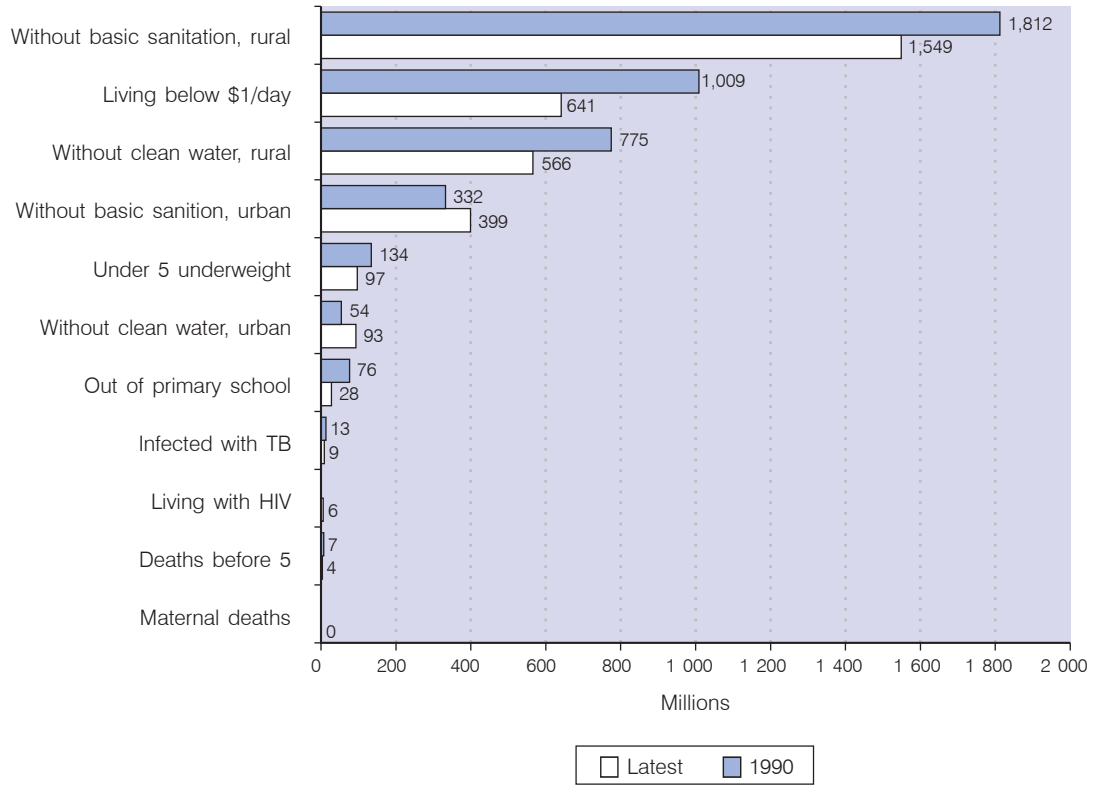


Figure 1-3 – Under-5 mortality, per 1,000 live births

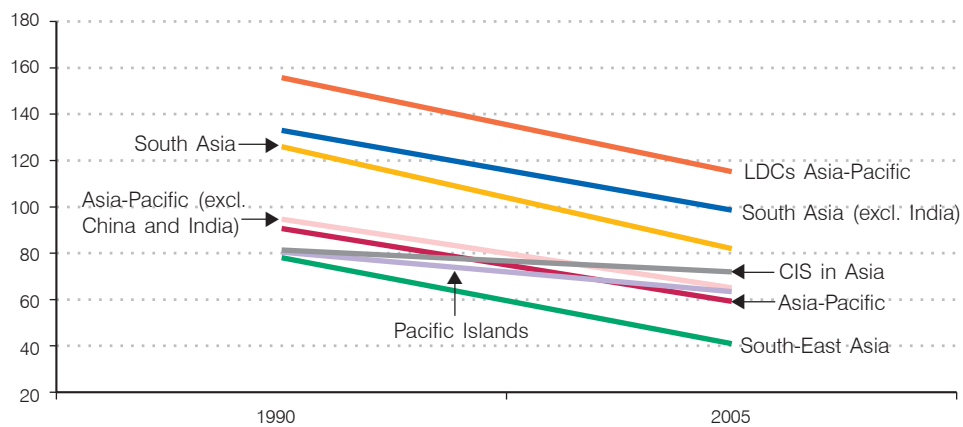


Figure 1-4 – 20 highest under-5 mortality rates, per 1,000 live births

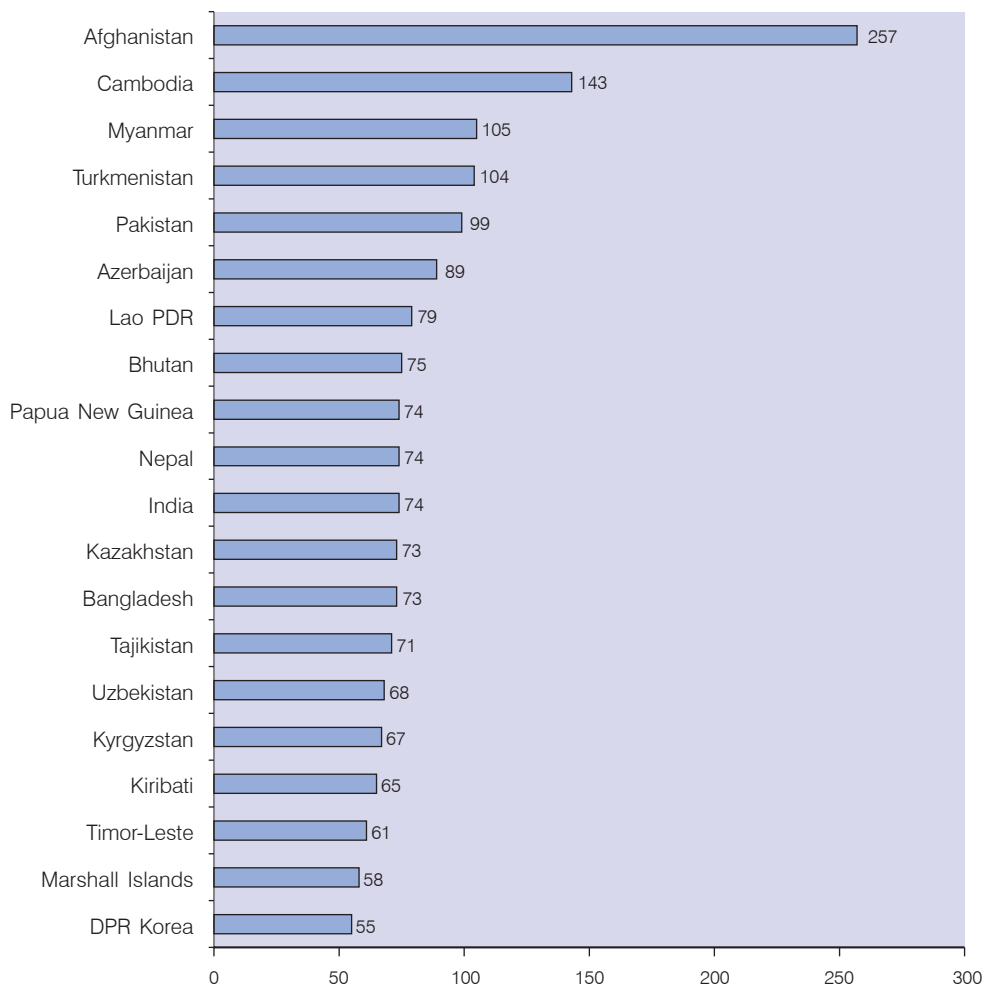
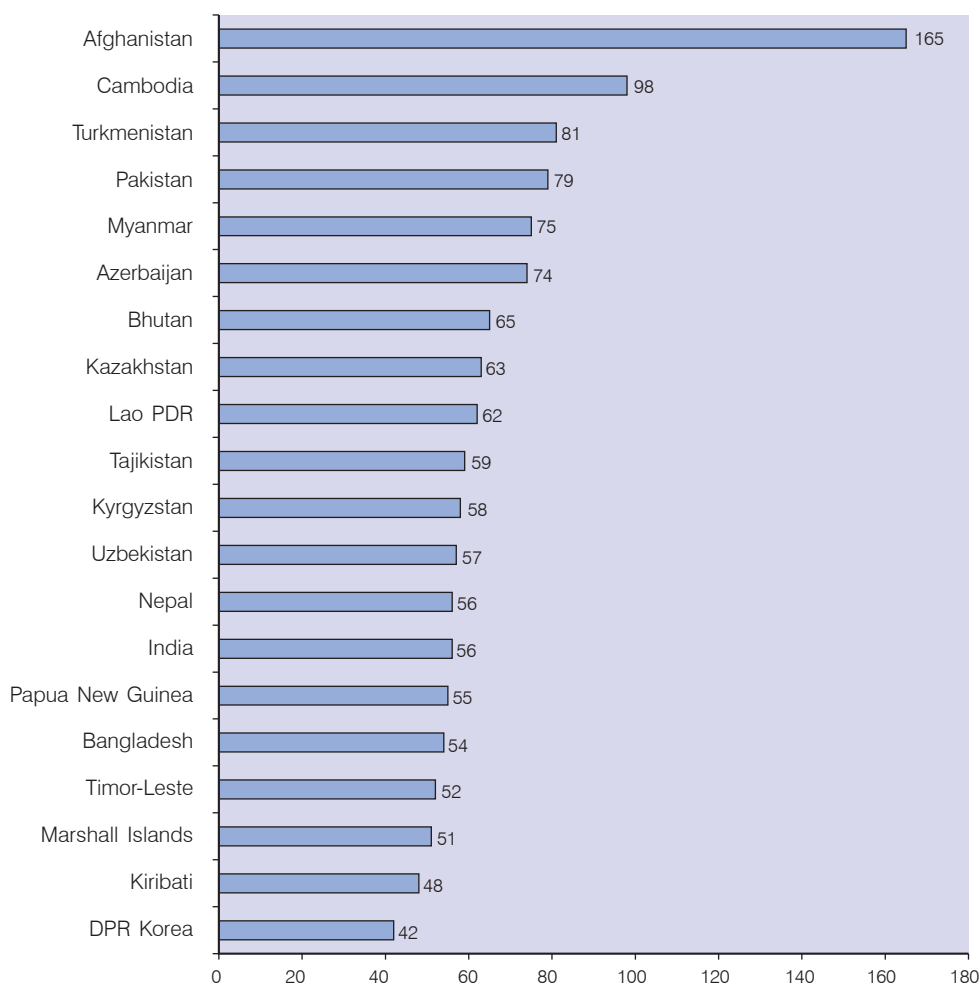


Figure 1-5 – 20 highest infant mortality rates, per 1,000 live births



Child mortality

Globally, child mortality globally has fallen to a record low (UNICEF, 2008), but the situation in Asia and the Pacific is still of great concern. Some four million children in the region die before they reach the age of five. Out of 47 countries for which data are available, 15 are off-track, and several have regressed; the situation is particularly disturbing in South Asia and Central Asia. The pattern for infant mortality is similar. But even countries that are 'on-track' or 'early achievers' have to remain vigilant as they can easily experience reverses.

Child mortality is closely related to gender inequality. Prevailing patriarchal norms in several countries have resulted in preferential treatment for boys over girls so that girls' standards of health

and nutrition are neglected. When countries are monitoring child mortality rates, they should therefore pay close attention to the sex ratios. Strategies under MDG 5 to improve women's levels of basic health and nutrition and to increase pregnant women's access to good health facilities will also help reduce infant deaths.

Maternal mortality

For maternal health the performance of Asia and the Pacific has been deeply disappointing. Some 250,000 women in the region die each year during childbirth or from pregnancy-related complications. The MDG target is to reduce the mortality ratio by three-quarters by 2015. In 1990, developing Asia's overall ratio was 395 deaths per 100,000 live births, but by 2000 this had fallen only

to 300. At the current rate of progress the region as a whole, and most countries, will miss the 2015 target.

Although the situation differs from country to country, there are a number of common problems. These include gender discrimination in access to health services, the poor quality of services, the lack of emergency obstetric care, and the shortage of skilled health personnel and community-level field workers. Another major factor is that many pregnant women are in poor health and are malnourished, often a result of their low social and economic status – especially vulnerable women such as refugees, migrant workers, minorities, and women in conflict areas.

All these deaths are avoidable. Indeed if all births took place in the presence of skilled attendants, and with access to emergency obstetric care, maternal mortality could be cut by 75 per cent (RightsBase, 2007).

Countries in the region have been attempting to improve maternal and child health. They have made efforts to improve maternal health services, including emergency obstetric care and to provide skilled attendants during pregnancy, at birth and during the postnatal period. But generally they have not been investing sufficient funds – which reduces the quality and affordability of services. Many countries in Central Asia and South-East Asia, for example, already have well-developed maternal health care systems but are experiencing a deterioration due to a cutback in public expenditures.

Progress in reducing maternal mortality has also been hampered by the lack of accurate statistics. Few of the poorest countries have effective systems for vital registration; for data on maternal deaths they usually rely on household and other surveys, which have their own limitations. It will be important therefore to introduce more effective systems for data collection.

The missing millions

The high number of maternal deaths also contributes to a declining sex ratio. In a number of countries, this imbalance is evident at birth. The sex ratio at birth (SRB), the ratio of males to females, in industrial countries is between 1.03 and 1.07. In China, however, the SRB is 1.2 and in India it is 1.08. Nepal and Viet Nam, amongst others, may also soon have skewed SRBs.

This occurs because in the Asia-Pacific region many parents, in both rural and urban areas, regard the birth of a boy as a gift but that of a girl as a 'curse from the gods' and may resort to selective abortion or infanticide. They have been better able to choose the sex of a child since the arrival of amniocentesis in the late 1970s and later with ultrasound imaging technologies. One study in four countries in the region characterizes the skewed outcome as 'gendercide' (UNFPA, 2007). The ratio is further distorted by subsequent gender-based violence or neglect which costs the lives of millions of women and girls. As a result, across the region more than 100 million women, as Amartya Sen has expressed it, are 'missing' (Sen, 1990). This shortage of women is now leading to a number of social problems leading to increased gender violence, migration and trafficking.

How can countries in the region tackle gendercide? The overall aim should be to promote the political and economic empowerment of women which has to start with ensuring education of the girl child. But education may not be sufficient. As a result of structural gender biases, education has not necessarily translated into better economic opportunities. Schooling needs therefore to be supplemented by range of other measures, including the reform of laws and practices on ownership and inheritance, along with campaigns of gender awareness for men, and efforts to overturn discriminative religious, social and cultural mores. Above all, women need to be able to organize themselves for their own empowerment.

Climate change and environmental sustainability

Across the region, many countries face increasing environmental stress and the threats of climate change (Box 1-3). Rapid economic growth has certainly been one of the main engines driving down income poverty. Yet in many countries, this has been at a huge environmental cost – including deforestation and the destruction of wetlands, along with increased CO₂ emissions, and extensive pollution of air and water. Environmental damage will further hamper the achievement of income poverty targets since it hits hardest at poor and vulnerable groups. Environmental degradation and lack of access to natural resources have their most severe effects on women who bear the primary responsibility for agricultural work, for collecting water and for providing food for their families.

Despite efforts at reforestation, many countries have been losing forest cover at alarming rates – including Brunei Darussalam, Cambodia, Indonesia, Lao PDR, Malaysia, Mongolia, Myanmar, Nepal, Philippines, Republic of Korea, Sri Lanka and Thailand. Much of this has been the result of clearing land for plantations.

Another major problem for the region is CO₂ emissions. Of 48 countries for which data are available, 30 are off-track for meeting the 2015 emissions target (Figure 1-6). Climate change will have a serious impact on the region – through rising sea levels and changing weather patterns that, among other things, will heighten problems of food insecurity. More positively, the region appears to be making significant progress in reducing the consumption of ozone-depleting CFCs: 37 of 47 countries examined have already reached the target and another 4 are on track.

Box 1-3 – Climate change, food security and the MDGs

Climate change could cause severe crop losses in Asia within the next 20 years – with potential food shortages and a loss of livelihoods for the world's poorest people. In many countries of the Asia-Pacific region, almost 70 per cent of the population depend for their livelihoods on agriculture. So efforts to fight poverty and hunger will demand closer attention to climate threats and to food production – assessing where they are likely to occur and for which crops.

Climate change models show that the impacts will vary substantially within regions according, for example, to biophysical resources and agricultural management practices. Some areas such as the temperate

wheat-growing areas of China could benefit from climate change, at least in the short run. But South Asia's production of staples including millet, maize and rice are projected to drop by 10 per cent over a period when population will continue to increase.

Typically, it takes 15 to 30 years for major agricultural investments to be fully realized, so work must start now to help subsistence farmers adapt to climate change. Some regions may benefit by switching to less vulnerable crops or by altering planting seasons. However the biggest benefits are likely to result from more costly measures, including the development of new crop varieties and the expansion of irrigation.

Source: UN/ISDR for Asia and the Pacific, Bangkok.

Water and sanitation

Two of the most critical environmental indicators for the MDGs are access to basic sanitation and safe drinking water. Here the region performs poorly (Figure

1-7 to Figure 1-10). Nearly half – 18 out of 38 – countries investigated are off-track for providing their rural populations access to safe water, and more than half – 17 out of 32 countries – are off-track for providing rural areas

Figure 1-6 – Highest CO₂ emissions, metric tonnes per capita

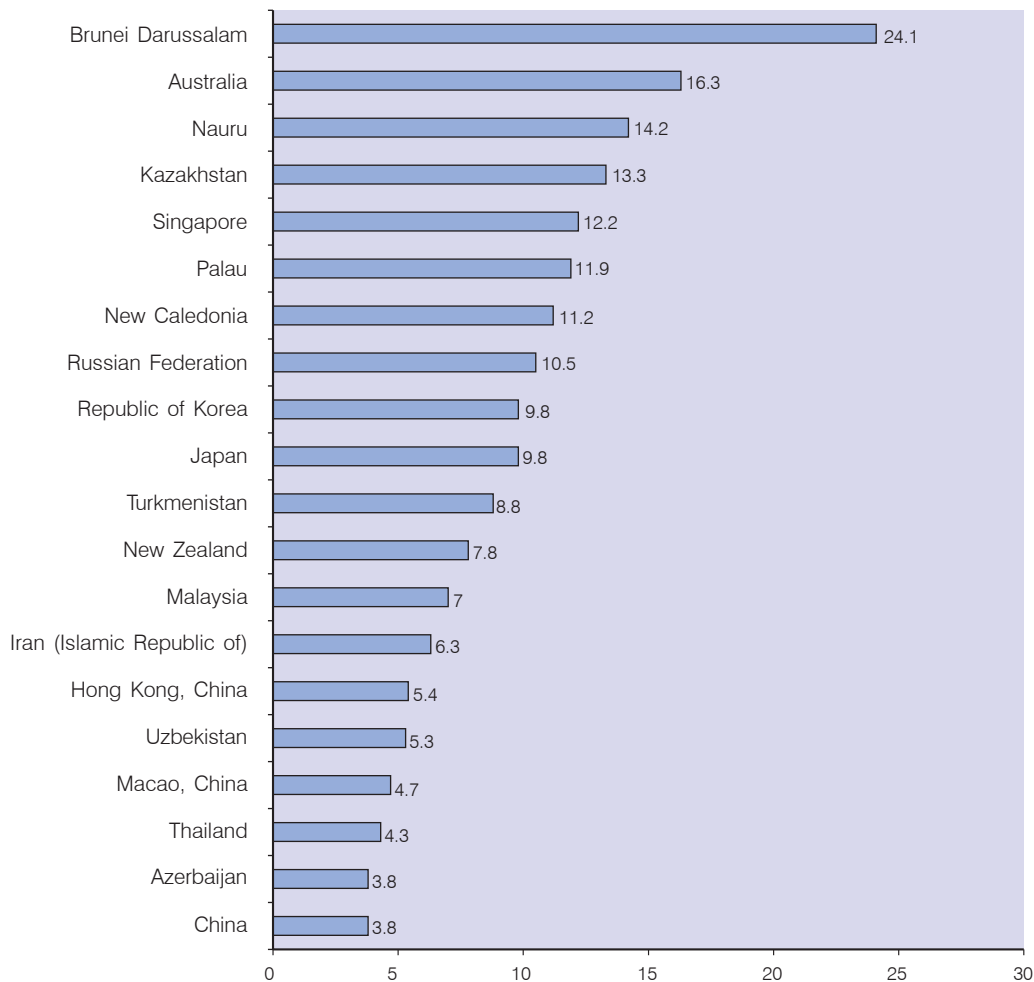


Figure 1-7 – Population with access to clean water, urban, percentage

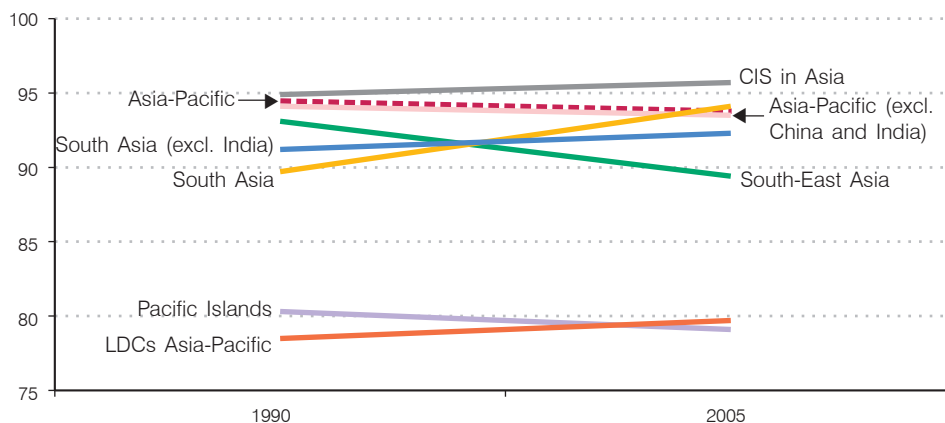


Figure 1-8 – Population with access to clean water, rural, percentage

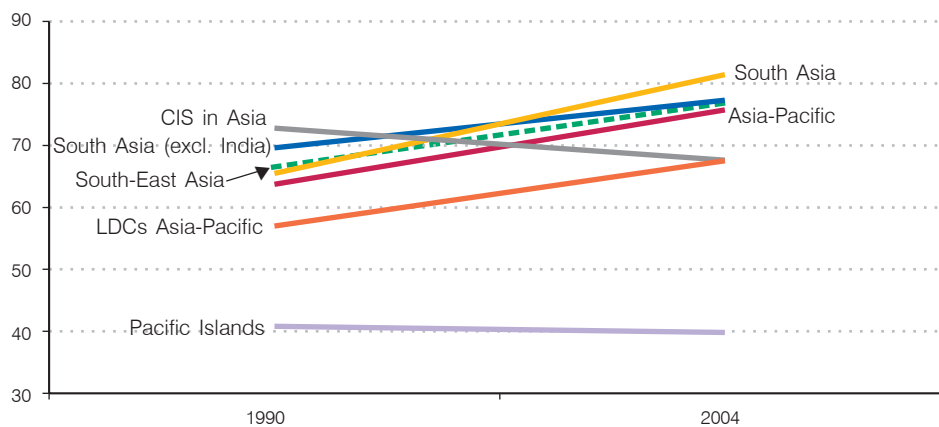


Figure 1-9 – Population with access to improved sanitation, urban, percentage

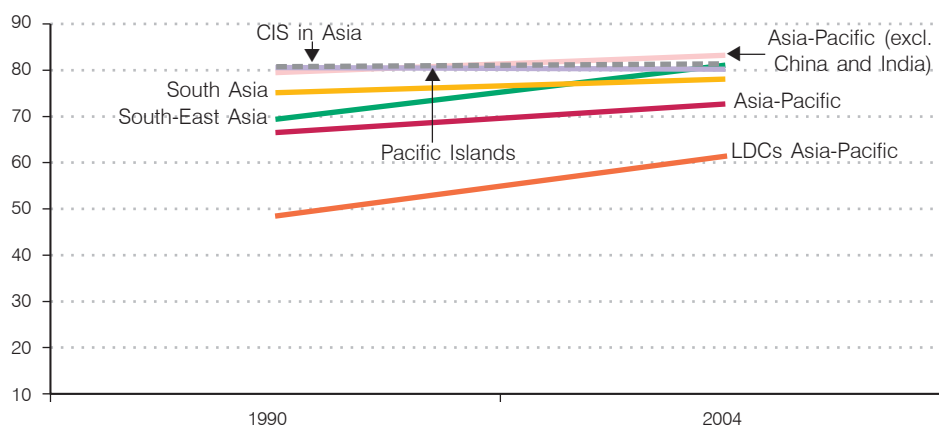
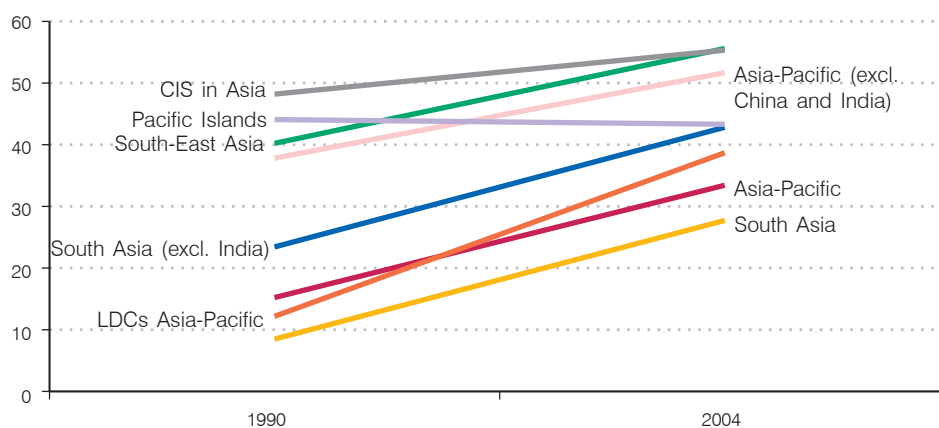


Figure 1-10 – Population with access to improved sanitation, rural, percentage



with access to basic sanitation. Countries across the region seem to have made greater progress in urban areas, but in several it seems that the early gains are fast disappearing as public service delivery systems struggle to keep pace with rapidly growing urban populations.

Promoting education

Most Asia-Pacific countries give a high priority to education – in which they invest significant private and public resources. This effort has paid off. Primary education is one of the region’s great successes: almost all countries have net primary enrolment ratios above 90 per cent and for many the ratio is approaching 100 per cent. Of 32 countries with data on education, half have already reached their target, although 10 are off-track.

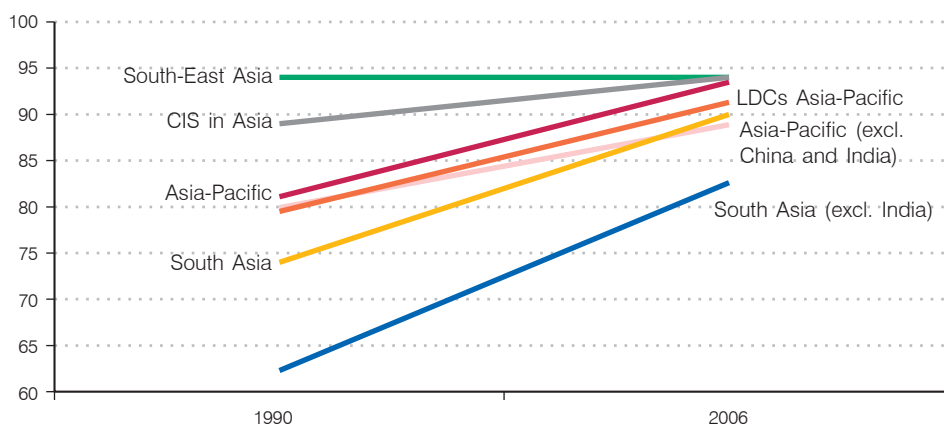
The region’s performance is less impressive, however, when it comes to repetition and completion. Many children have to repeat classes or drop out of school before reaching grade five. The problems are greatest for children from poor households – reducing the prospect of education lifting them out of poverty.

Many poor households keep their children at home or withdraw them before they complete their primary education. They may do so partly because they do

not appreciate the long-term benefits of education, particularly for girls who will leave their home after marriage. Or they may want their children to work. But they can also be deterred by the high cost of school materials, the low quality of teaching and, particularly for girls, the distance that children have to travel to school. There are also pressures for girls to marry at an early age. As a result, some countries have fallen short in gender equality. In Afghanistan, for example, 47 per cent fewer girls than boys enrol in primary school; in Pakistan, that proportion is 29 per cent, and in Cambodia, Lao PDR and Nepal the difference is around 10 per cent. High discrimination in primary education leads to lower literacy rates for girls as well as low enrolment in secondary and tertiary education.

This need not happen. A number of Asia-Pacific countries have shown that it is possible to eliminate gender disparity in education relatively quickly. But even in these there is still room for improvement at the highest levels: more than one-third of the 26 countries examined are off-track in achieving gender parity in tertiary education. There are also disparities in the choice of subjects for specialization in colleges and universities, with fewer young women choosing science and technology. This often reflects the expectations not of the young women themselves but those of their families or educators.

Figure 1-11 – Primary enrolment, percentage



Policy makers have long recognized these complex interactions and have tried to devise appropriate interventions. Some involve legislation and enforcement – making basic education compulsory, and strictly enforcing restrictions on child marriage. Others include reducing the costs of schooling and ensuring more and better trained teachers, especially females, and good sanitary facilities. Governments have also taken action to reduce gender-based violence, both within schools and in journeys to school.

Women's economic and political empowerment

Discrimination against girls and women is also widespread in the world of work. One useful indicator is women's share in non-agricultural wage employment. On this basis in some countries women are doing well: in Cambodia, Kyrgyzstan, Mongolia and the Russian Federation there are more women working than men. In several Asia-Pacific countries, however, women are some way behind. Moreover, even when women are working they are predominantly employed in labour-intensive, low value-added manufacturing and service-sector jobs – vulnerable to domestic and global shifts in demand. As economic growth picks up in these countries, there will probably be greater demand for labour in the non-agricultural wage paying sectors, including for female labour, but given the kind of work women do these gains will remain fragile.

Women's low status in employment is another denial of basic rights. But it also has economic costs. ESCAP has estimated that the cost to the region of continuing gender discrimination could reach \$80 billion per year (ESCAP, 2007).

Women are also less likely to hold positions of political power. The simplest way to measure this is in national parliaments, by looking at the percentage

of seats held by women. Globally the average is quite low, around 15 per cent, but in many countries of the region it is in single digits and since 1990 several countries have regressed. In the region, only in New Zealand do women hold more than 30 per cent of parliamentary seats. However, some countries have shown improvements. In India, the world's largest democracy, the representation of women in parliament has almost doubled. In Bangladesh the number of seats reserved for women was raised in 2004 from 30 to 75. And in Timor-Leste in 2007 women won 28 per cent of parliamentary seats (UNIFEM, 2007)

Discrimination against women takes many forms so it needs to be tackled simultaneously on multiple fronts – in the family, in education, in the workplace and in society in general. All governments need to integrate considerations of gender equality in national legislation and in public policies, plans and programmes.

Poverty

The region continues to make progress in reducing income poverty (Figure 1-14). Between 1990 and 2004, the proportion of people living on less than \$1 (PPP) a day fell from 32.3 to 17 per cent. Over the same period, and despite population growth, the absolute number of poor people also fell, from 1,009 million to about 641 million. Data for 22 countries indicate that most of these were able to reduce poverty between the early 1990s and early 2000s (ESCAP/ADB/ UNDP, 2004 and 2007). Moreover, in just two years, between 2002 and 2004, the number of people living in extreme poverty fell by 82 million.

The MDG targets are defined according to the \$1-per-day poverty line, which constitutes extreme poverty. Generally, however, a more appropriate measure is the national poverty line which is based on local incomes and prices and better

Figure 1-12 – Lowest shares of women in non-agricultural wage employment, percentage

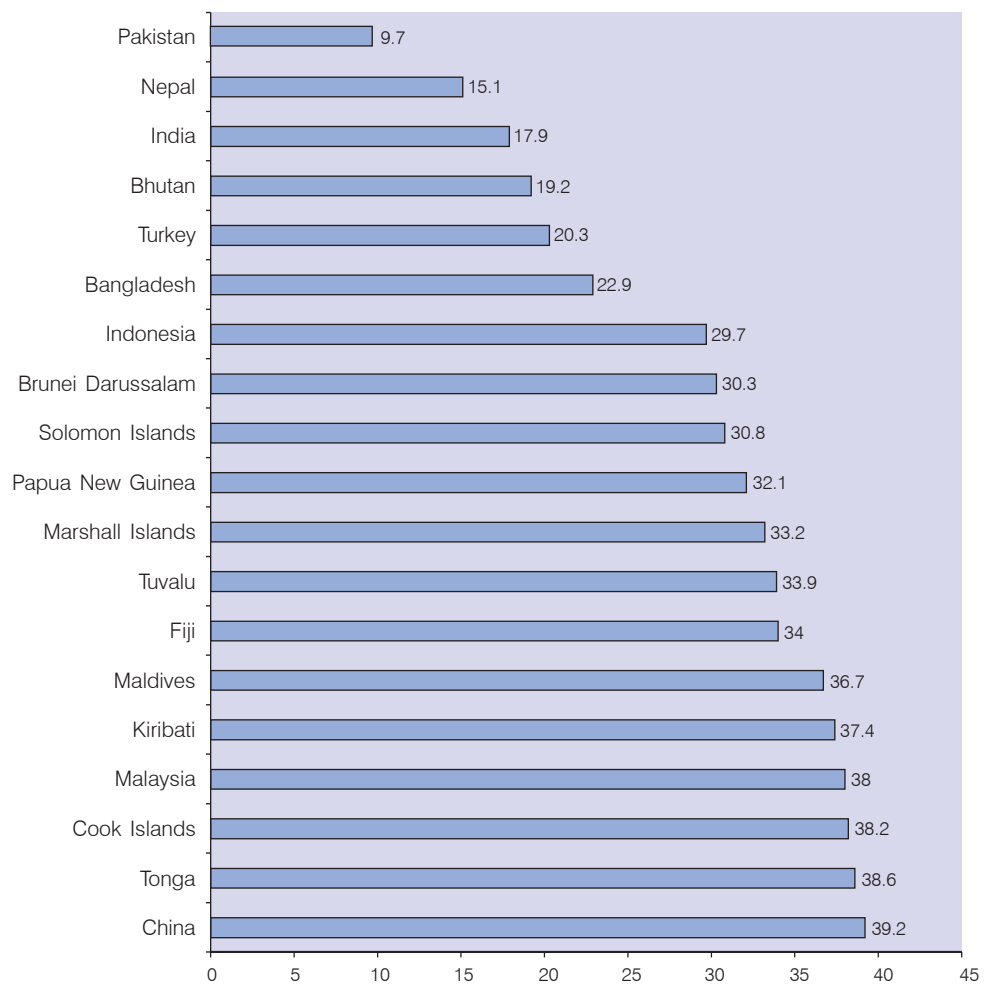


Figure 1-13 – Proportion of national parliamentary seats held by women, percentage

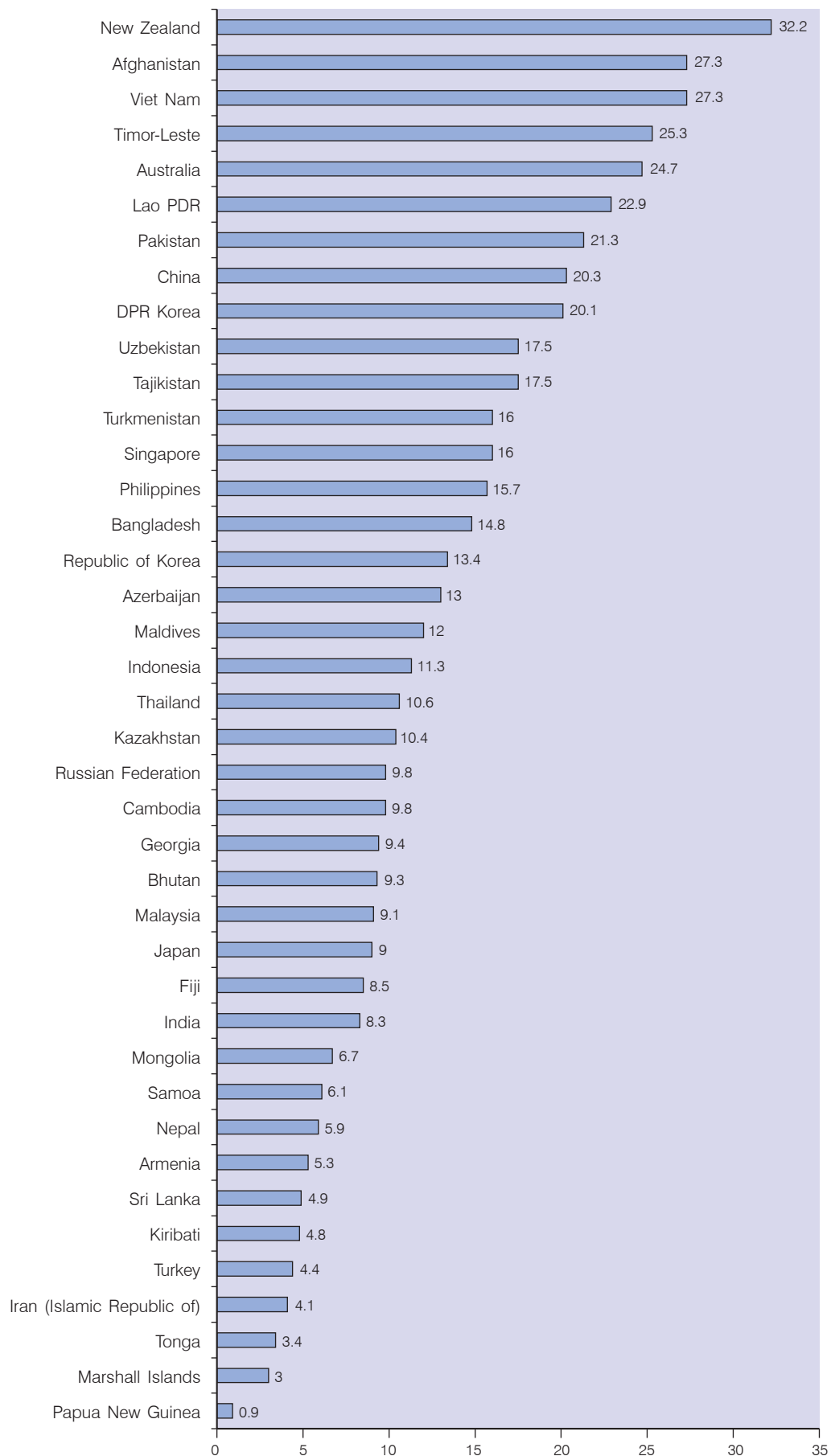


Figure 1-14 – Population below \$1 per day, by subregion, 1990-2004, percentage

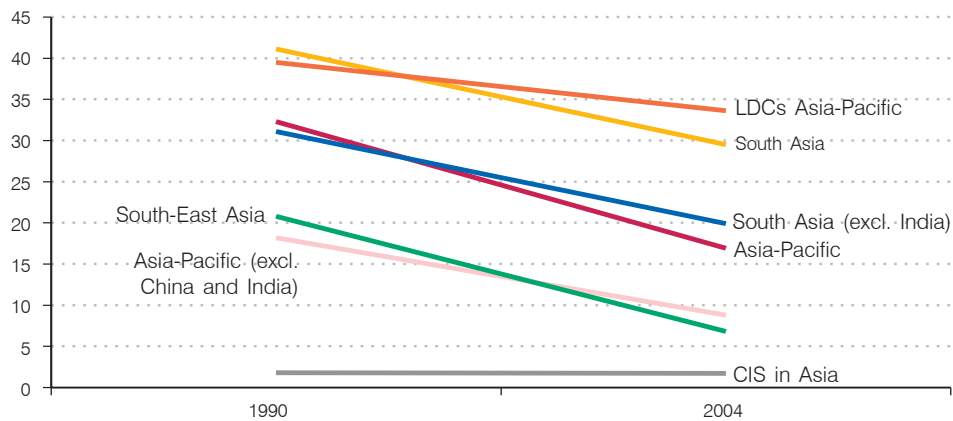
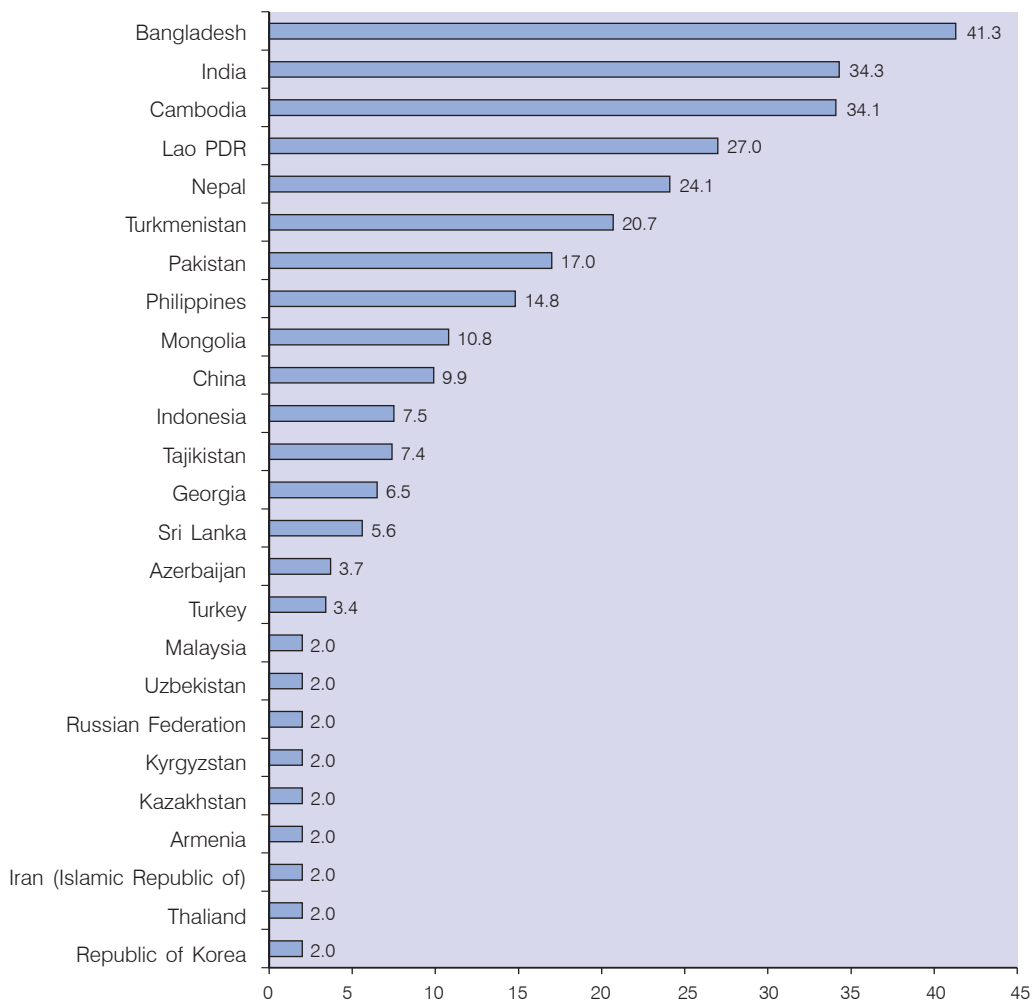


Figure 1-15 – Population below \$1 per day, 2004, percentage



reflects national conditions. For most countries, the rates are higher than the international poverty lines, though in most of these cases the poverty rates have fallen.

One of the region's great success stories has been China which between 1990 and 2004 reduced the incidence of extreme poverty from 33 to 10 per cent, thus surpassing the 2015 target – and taking a vast number of people out of poverty. Sharp reductions have also occurred in Azerbaijan, Indonesia and Thailand. On the other hand, between the early 1990s and early 2000s, it is clear that some countries have slipped backwards.

Moreover, despite falls in poverty, progress has been uneven (Box 1-4) and some countries, particularly in the recent past, have experienced sharp in-

creases in inequality. An ADB study in 16 developing countries in the region, for example, showed that between 1993 and 2003 the aggregate Gini-coefficient increased from 47 to 52. Sharp increases were noted in several countries, including Bangladesh, Cambodia, China, Lao PDR, Nepal and Sri Lanka. Another measure of inequality is the share of the poor in national income or consumption: except in Japan the share of the poorest 20 per cent remains less than 10 per cent and in several countries appears to have gone down. Poverty rates for children defined broadly can also be higher than those for adults (Box 1-5).

High income poverty and increasing inequality accompanied by limited or no access to public resources, and a sense of powerlessness among the poor, can pose serious challenges for

Box 1-4 – Eradication of extreme poverty – uneven progress

Even countries that have made exemplary progress in reducing poverty still have pockets of society that face extreme poverty, hunger and malnutrition. The largest group is formed by the rural poor, who have often been neglected in national economic planning and policies.

India – Many of the poorest states are predominantly agrarian. In the poverty-stricken state of Orissa, for example, nearly 85 per cent of the population live in rural areas and are dependent on agricultural resources and livelihoods. However, agriculture has experienced only weak growth in wage employment, and productivity is low. As a result, rural households find it difficult to escape poverty. Similarly in the state of Chhattisgarh, known as the rice bowl of Central India, 80 per cent of the total population live in rural areas. Approximately 98 per cent of rural villagers

and 96 per cent urban of dwellers live on less than \$1 per day (CECOEDECON/IDS, 2007).

Indonesia – Two-thirds of poor households are employed in agriculture. Moreover, the district and provincial disparities have widened: in 2004 in the largely rural province of Papua, for example, the poverty rate was 41 per cent compared with 3 per cent in the capital, Jakarta. In 2002, the official MDG report asserted that the country as a whole were still on track to achieve the poverty reduction target by 2015, nevertheless, many provinces and districts with insurgencies and secessionist movements were far behind the national average of 18 per cent. For example, about one-third of the population in Maluku, Gorontalo, East and West Nusa Tenggara and Aceh lived below the poverty line (Government of Indonesia, 2004).

Box 1-5 – Fulfilling the rights of children

Social-sector service provision has traditionally been measured in terms of output and achievement per person, expressed as national averages. More recently, however, there have been efforts – using a rights approach – to stress inequalities and disparities and focus more closely on social justice and especially on the conditions of the poor.

Even in countries that have had dramatic achievements in reaching the MDGs, sizeable parts of the population may be left behind, including minority ethnic groups or those in geographically remote areas. Women and girls in particular often suffer greater poverty often as a result of direct discrimination – including difficulties in birth registration, limited access to free primary education, and discrimination against women in laws relating to marriage, labour, inheritance and property.

It will also be important to look specifically at the rights of children.

For adults, poverty measures are normally based on income. Poverty measures of children, however, should include other indicators, including whether the child has been vaccinated and is attending school. Child and adult poverty are poorly correlated, indicating that child poverty needs a different kind of attention. This has massive policy and resource implications, since in most countries children constitute one-third to one-half of the population.

But further progress remains to be made to ensure that the MDGs capture the full scope of the Millennium Declaration in respect of child poverty and denials of children's rights. These include corporal punishment and other types of violence and abuse in homes, communities and schools, as well as incarceration of children with adults and other inappropriate forms of legal process.

Source: UNICEF East Asia and Pacific Regional Office, Bangkok.

social stability and economic well-being. These issues are compounded by weakness in governance, problems in service delivery, and persistent gender discrimination (Box 1-6).

Hunger and malnutrition

Hunger is a term for which there is no single, clear, and universally-accepted definition. According to the MDG standard, the average daily energy requirement for adults undertaking light activity is 2,200 calories. But there also degrees of hunger. The International Food Policy Research Institute suggests three categories: the 'subadjacent hungry', who consume between 1,800 and 2,200

calories per day; the 'medial hungry', consuming 1,600 to 1,800 calories; and the 'ultra hungry', consuming less than 1,600 calories (Jha, 2008).

According to FAO, on the basis of the 2,200 calorie standard about 545 million people in Asia and the Pacific are undernourished – constituting 65 per cent of the world's undernourished. Of these, 300 million are in South Asia of whom 233 million are in India. Some 160 million are in East Asia, of whom 119 million are in China. South-East Asia has 65 million (FAO, 2004).

Although the Asia-Pacific region has seen an overall reduction in both the number and prevalence of undernour-

Box 1-6 – Seven inequalities faced by women

Nobel prize winner Amartya Sen identified seven main types of gender inequality

Mortality inequality – Women are more prone to dying early owing to female infanticide, less importance given to their own health and nutrition

Natality inequality – Male children are preferred and female children are often aborted.

Basic facilities inequality – Females have less access to education and learning or fewer opportunities to enhance their talents and skills.

Special facilities inequality – Females may have access to basic facilities

such as primary education, but they may not have access to higher learning, or learning in sciences – because the culture does not see this as ‘feminine’.

Professional inequality – Women find it more difficult to get certain kinds of jobs or to advance at the same rate as men.

Ownership inequality – Women do not have the same rights as men for inheritance or ownership.

Household inequality – Even if there are not gender inequalities for education within a household, specific roles are typically set aside for girls and boys.

ished people, the average rate of reduction has fallen short of what would be required to meet the MDG goal of halving the undernourished population by 2015. Furthermore, while the prevalence of hunger has fallen, the number of undernourished people has increased, largely as a result of increased numbers in China and India (FAO, 2006). The highest rates of undernutrition, however, are to be found in Tajikistan, DPR Korea, Cambodia, and Bangladesh (Figure 1-16).

Another vital indicator of hunger is the proportion of under-5 children who are underweight. Here the region has been making progress, but far too slowly (Figure 1-17). The Asia-Pacific region as a whole, with 28 per cent of its under-5 children underweight, is considerably behind its target for 2015 – and accounts for around two-thirds of the world’s underweight children; in some countries, the proportion is almost 50 per cent (Figure 1-18).

Many children are underweight at birth, which is part of a continuing cycle of

malnutrition. Underweight and malnourished girls grow up to be undernourished mothers, who with poor health care in pregnancy are in turn at risk of giving birth to underweight children. As Figure 1-19 highlights, there are many complex two-way interactions between nutrition and health. On the one hand, undernourished children are more susceptible to infection and disease; on the other hand, regular infections, particularly due to unsafe water supplies, reduce children’s capacity to absorb nutrients. Moreover, children and women are also subject to other forms of malnutrition including micronutrient and vitamin deficiencies that put them at further risk. However, these forms of malnutrition are not necessarily the result of absolute shortages of food, especially given the small amounts that small children eat, but rather due to inadequate feeding, especially when children are being weaned.

The various forms of malnutrition have enormous human costs. In Bangladesh and India, for example, more than 30 per cent of all children are born under-

Figure 1-16 – 20 highest proportions of population undernourished, percentage

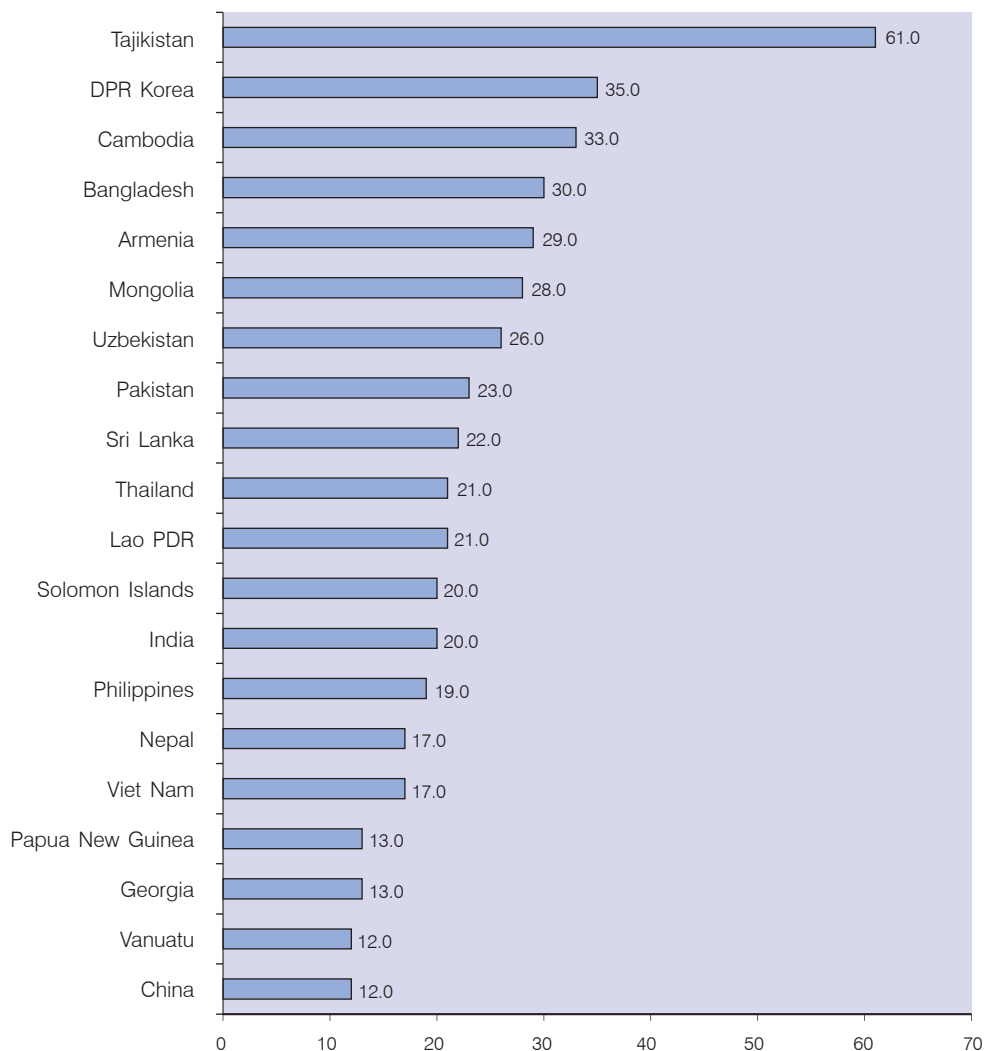


Figure 1-17 – Proportion of under-5 children underweight, percentage

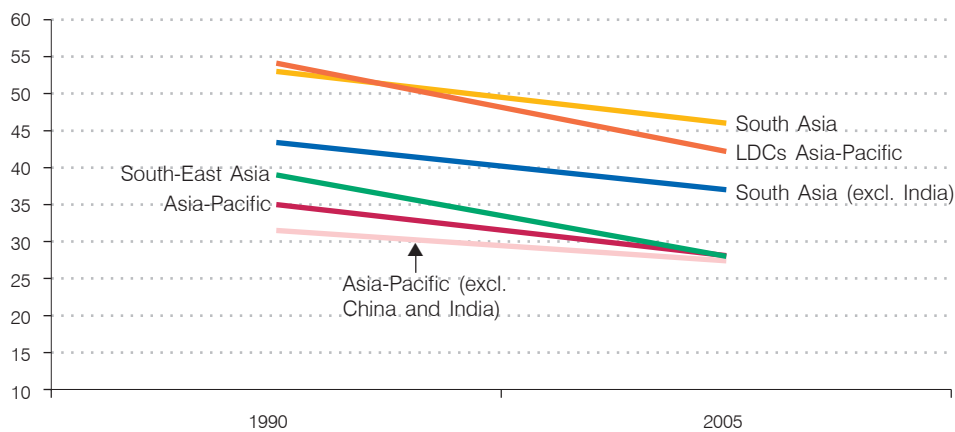


Figure 1-18 – Children under-5 underweight, percentage

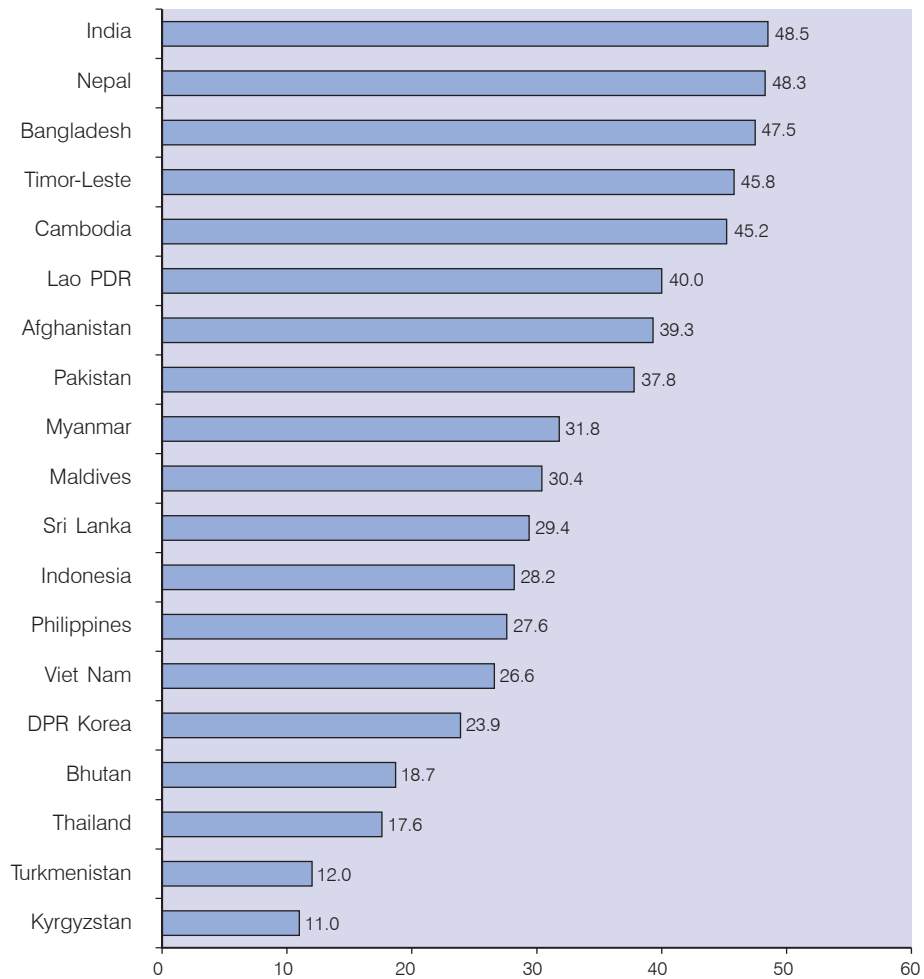
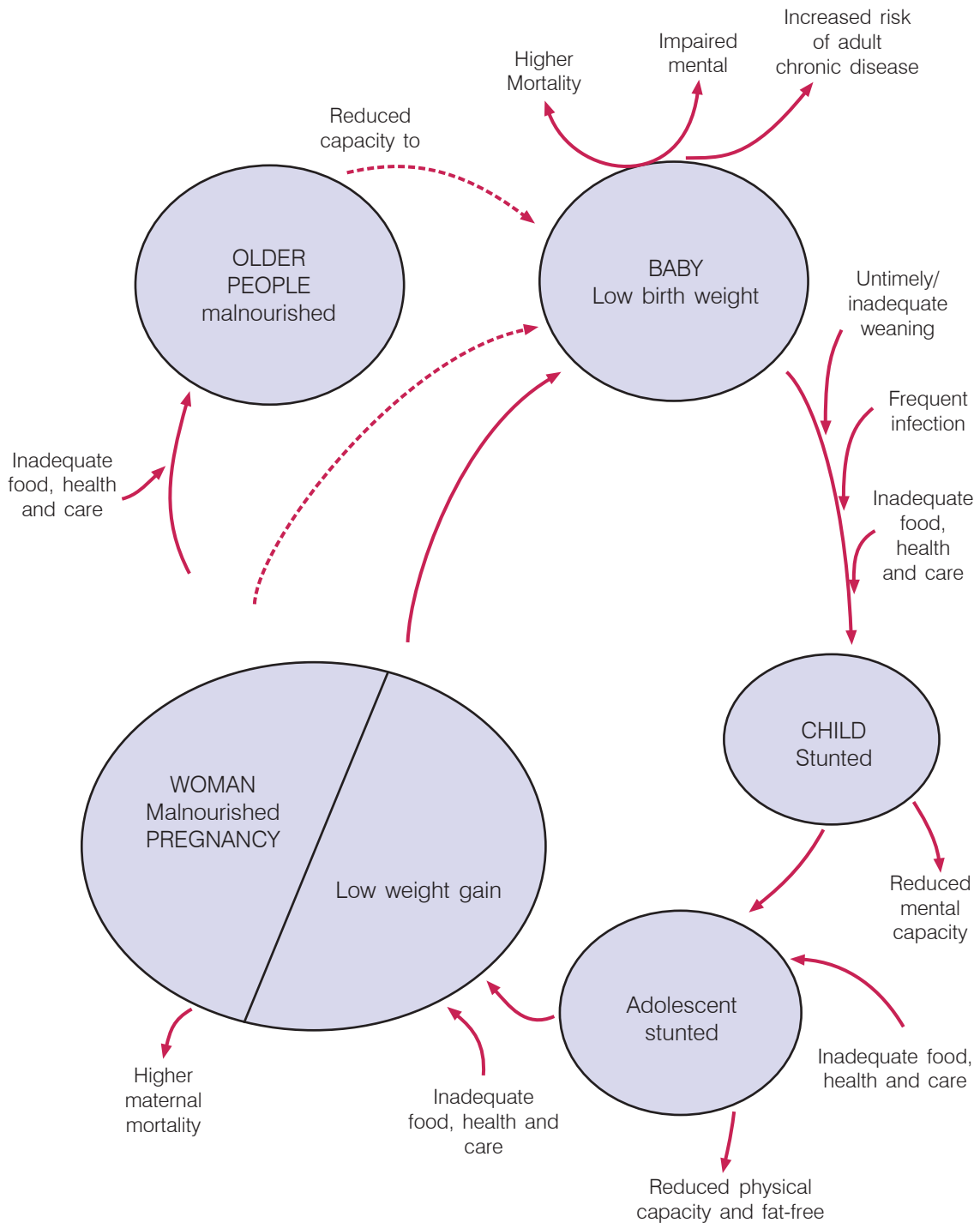


Figure 1-19 – Hunger and malnutrition through the lifecycle



Source: FAO, 2004

weight, and run greater risks of dying in infancy, or of suffering stunted physical and cognitive growth. The impact of hunger is worst on girl children and women, who typically eat least and last, often surviving on left-overs. There are also serious economic costs. Children whose physical and cognitive growth has been slowed have diminished working capacity as adults. Across the region, malnutrition and hunger each year cost billions of dollars of lost productivity, earnings and consumption (FAO, 2004). There are also political risks: when people cannot afford to feed themselves and their families, there are likely to be social disturbances.

Tackling hunger and malnutrition is a huge and complex undertaking (Box 1-7), but one of the most basic tasks is to ensure food security and particularly grain security. This requires grain that is nutritionally adequate and socially acceptable but also that people have full economic, physical and social access to such grain at all times.

Unfortunately grain security is not guaranteed. China, for example, is a major producer and feeds 22 per cent of the world's population with only 7 per cent of the world's available land. Normally it has sufficient grain capacity for national demand. But in recent years the country has suffered a number of setbacks: over the period 2000-2003, following climatic disasters, grain production fell, resulting in an annual shortfall of 15-20 million tonnes. Severe winter conditions in 2007-2008 made things even more difficult, destroying crops and greenhouses, and severely affecting winter food production. In some of the worst-hit areas, prices for fresh fruit and vegetables doubled. Escalating food prices has also contributed to inflation: China's consumer price index rose nearly 5 per cent for all of 2007, and in December alone was up 6.5 per cent. India too has millions of people suffering from grain insecurity: in 2006, while the per capita food requirement was 510 grams per day, availability declined to 390 grams.

All countries in the region need to strengthen their management of food production, distribution and reserves. But there are also measures that can be taken at the regional level.

It is clear however that hunger and malnutrition are not due primarily to problems with food production. Nor are they simply the outcome of poverty. In fact, the region has been more successful at producing food and reducing poverty than it has at reducing hunger and child malnutrition. Some of the problems lie with the way the food is used. One of the most important steps will be to increase women's status. This not only fulfils their basic rights but also raises standards for other members of the household, since women who have better standards of education, and who have greater access to productive assets and resources will be in a better position to ensure that their children are well fed. Countries will also need to improve essential social infrastructure to relieve women of some of the burden of care-giving.

Communicable diseases

Across the region, HIV remains a major concern: 6 million people are infected with the virus. Although the region still has a prevalence which, at 0.3 per cent, is lower than in some other world regions, it still some way from meeting the MDG goal of halting and reversing the spread of the pandemic by 2015: of 31 Asia-Pacific countries that had sufficient data, 7 were off-track (Figure 1-20).

India alone accounts for more than two million people with HIV and other populous countries, such as Bangladesh, China, Indonesia, Pakistan and Viet Nam, also have rising numbers of infections. A disturbing trend is the growing number of married women infected by their husbands. The most common ways to acquire HIV include injecting drug use and unprotected sex. In their efforts to halt and reverse the spread of

Box 1-7 – Strategies to eliminate hunger

Strengthen productivity and incomes	Linkages	Provide direct access to food
Diversification and growth of the economy.	Democratic governance	Mother and infant feeding
Low-cost, simple technology (water management, use of green manure, crop rotation, agro-forestry, poly-culture)	Vibrant civil society	Supplementary nutrition to children for children and women
Rural infrastructure (roads, electricity)	Strong 'fourth estate'	
	Local food procurement for safety nets	Unemployment and pension benefits
Improved irrigation and soil nutrition	Support to rural organizations	Food-for-work and food-for-education
Natural resource management including forestry and fisheries	Primary health care, and reproductive health services	Targeted conditional cash transfers
Market and private sector development	Prevention and treatment of HIV/AIDS	Food banks and food distribution system for the indigent
Food safety and quality	Asset redistribution, including land reform	Emergency rations
Agricultural research, extension and training	Education, especially for girls and women	
Support for agricultural producers	Potable water	
	Strong legal framework – right to food, fair wages	

HIV/AIDS countries in the region will need to educate people about the risks while also tackling deep-rooted and interlinked gender inequalities that have rendered women particularly vulnerable.

Large numbers of people in the region are infected by two other diseases – malaria and tuberculosis. Malaria is a major public health concern in many areas and in some places appears to

have become drug resistant. Tuberculosis also remains a serious problem: Asia and the Pacific has two of every three people in the world infected by the disease. However, the region as a whole is making some progress: between 1990 and 2003 the number of people infected with TB declined from 12.8 million to 10.3 million and the number of people dying each year fell from 1.1 million to 1.0 million.

Figure 1-20 – HIV prevalence, ages 15-49, percentage

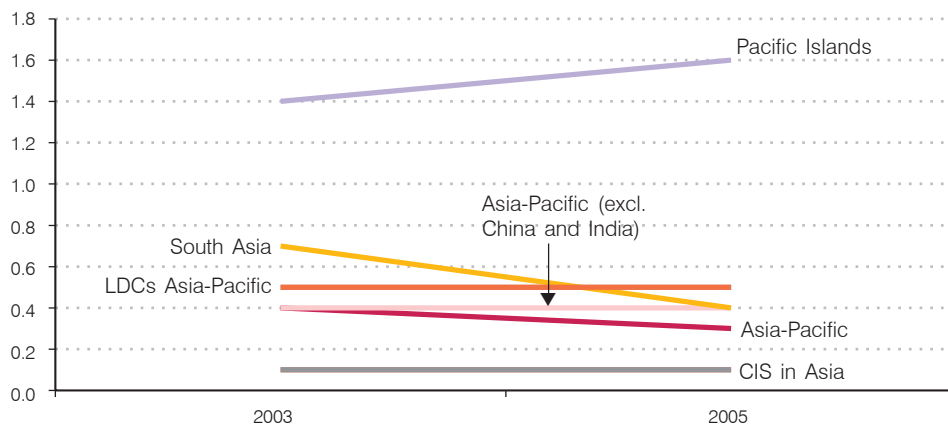
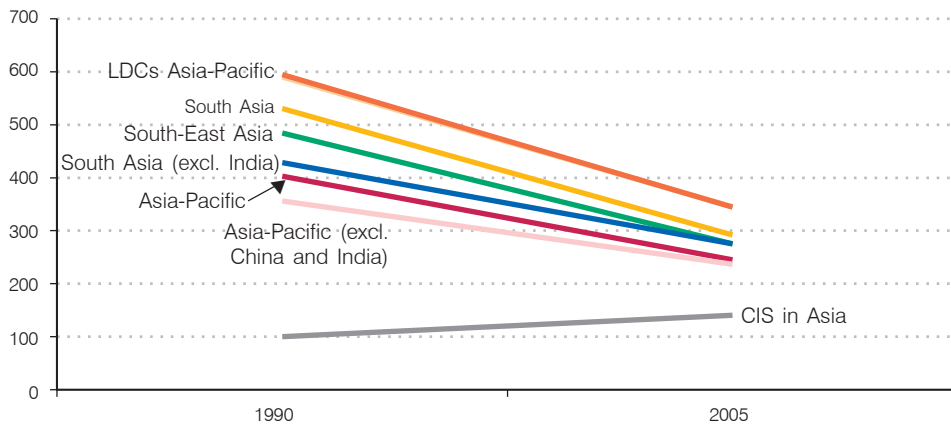


Figure 1-21 – TB prevalence, per 100,000 population



Global cooperation

Achieving the MDGs will depend primarily on national efforts, but the least developed countries in particular should be able to rely on support from richer countries both within the region and beyond. Recognizing this, the eighth Millennium Development Goal calls for a cooperative framework through official

development assistance (ODA), debt sustainability and international trade.

Development assistance

In 2005, only five countries: Denmark, Luxemburg, Netherlands, Norway and Sweden had lived up to the developed country pledge that ODA should constitute at least 0.7 per cent of their gross

national income. Nevertheless the volume of aid has increased: between 1990 and 2005, global flows of ODA rose from \$23 billion to million to \$44 billion. Also encouraging is that an increasing proportion of this is being devoted to basic social services; in some donor countries more than 30 per cent. The proportion of bilateral ODA that is untied has also risen steeply and in the case of Ireland and the Untied States has now reached 100 per cent.

International trade

Goal 8 also recognizes the importance of international trade. The trends in duty-free access to developed-country markets for developing and least developed countries seem to vary between regional groupings. In 1996, Asia-Pacific LDCs had the same level of duty-free access as sub-Saharan LDCs – about 60 per cent – but by the late 1990s and early 2000s, their share of trade had declined.

Their position seems to be improving but it still remains much below the levels recorded for the sub-Saharan LDCs.

The LDCs should be able to increase their exports to other countries in the region, including the larger developing countries. To do this they will also need better access. Of the developing countries in the region, China and India have done most to allow LDCs duty-free access to their markets.

Aside from the LDCs, the developing countries in the region are also affected by trade barriers applied by developed

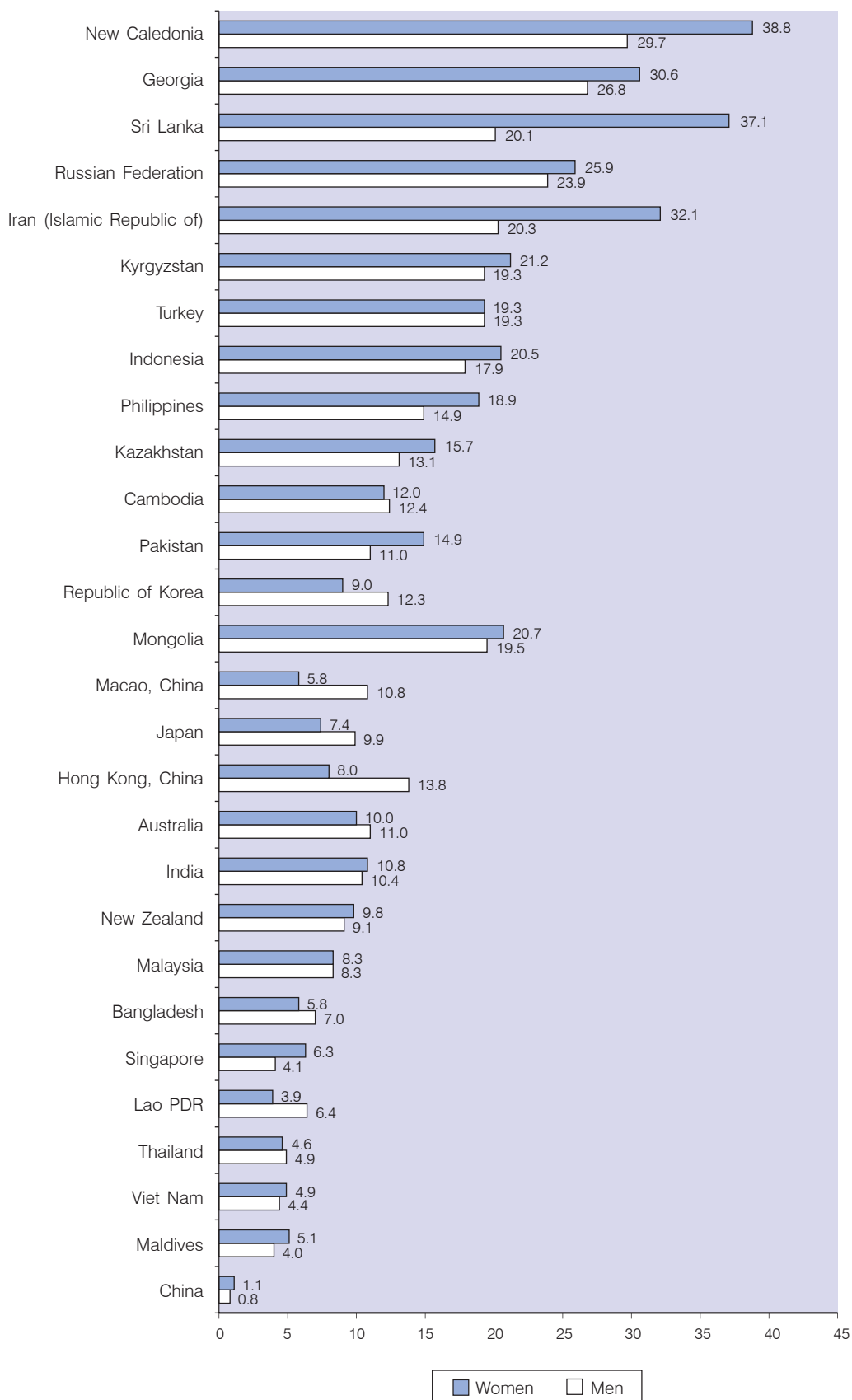
countries. China and South-East Asia appear to face the highest average tariffs imposed on agricultural products, textiles and clothing from developing countries. They also suffer because the developed countries maintain high levels of agricultural protection.

Goal 8 also sets targets for other forms of co-operation. It calls for developed and developing countries to formulate and implement strategies for opening up decent and productive work for youth and thus integrate them in the MDG process. But that task remains largely unfulfilled (Figure 1-22). Indeed, the Asia-Pacific region now faces a very disturbing situation: youth unemployment is on the rise almost every where and in several countries has reached double-digit levels. Although some countries they have narrowed the gap, overall young women seem to have higher levels of unemployment than young men.

No-one left behind

Countries in Asia and the Pacific thus have much to be proud of. In most countries, the next generation are likely to be less poor and better educated. The risk now, however, is that of rising inequality – that the benefits of development are increasingly being skewed towards the better off. As the Millennium Declaration makes clear, development is for everyone. The challenge now is to ensure that no-one is left behind. The ways of achieving this and of filling the gaps are the subject of the next chapter.

Figure 1-22 – Youth unemployment rate, age 15-24, by sex, percentage



Box 1-8 – Ensuring rights and obligations of migrant workers contributes to the achievement of the MDGs

There are no simple cause and effect relationships between migration and the MDGs. The results can be both positive and negative. Governments, and other stakeholders need therefore to manage migration so as to enhance the positive impacts and minimize the negative ones.

Migrants from poorer countries living both legally and illegally in richer countries live daily with fear of arrest. Nevertheless the lack of economic opportunities back home means that they cannot afford to pass up the opportunity of even the worst jobs in richer economies.

Migrants often enter and work in host countries irregularly. This is partly because they have relatively few legal channels for working – and these are often complicated and relatively expensive. Many migrants

and their employers thus avoid legal registration – leaving workers and their families marginalized, without access to basic social and health services and exposed to potential abuse.

Host country governments are aware of the resulting social, public health and other risks. They see that depriving a generation of migrant children from education or excluding migrant communities from national welfare schemes will be obstacles to achieving the MDGs. On the other hand, the prospects of achieving the MDGs will be increased by improving migrants' legal rights, offering them protection and providing them with access to basic services. Government and international organizations need therefore to ensure that MDG policies and programmes specifically address migration concerns.

Source: IOM Regional Office, Bangkok.

2. Filling the MDG gaps

Achieving the Millennium Development Goals will mean boosting economic growth. But this will not be enough. Even the most optimistic growth scenarios are likely to leave major gaps that will need to be filled by determined and imaginative action at both national and international levels.

“Since their adoption by all United Nations Member States in 2000, the Millennium Declaration and the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) have become a universal framework of development” – Ban Ki-moon, Secretary-General, United Nations, 2007.

For the MDGs to fulfil their potential as this universal framework they need to find a place in national development strategies – and in particular those for promoting economic growth. Strong growth should make it easier to achieve the MDGs. But growth will not suffice. South Asia, for example, includes countries that are strong performers economically but under-perform in relation to social indicators (UNICEF, 2007).

This chapter analyzes the contribution, and limitations of economic growth for achieving the MDGs. The conceptual framework is illustrated in Figure 2-1. On the left side this indicates how inadequate policies and strategies will not only hamper growth but also weaken the linkages to poverty reduction while undermining social services. These inadequacies can be seen leading one of two gaps. The first is an ‘MDG gap’ – the likely shortfall in MDG indicators on the basis of present patterns of growth.

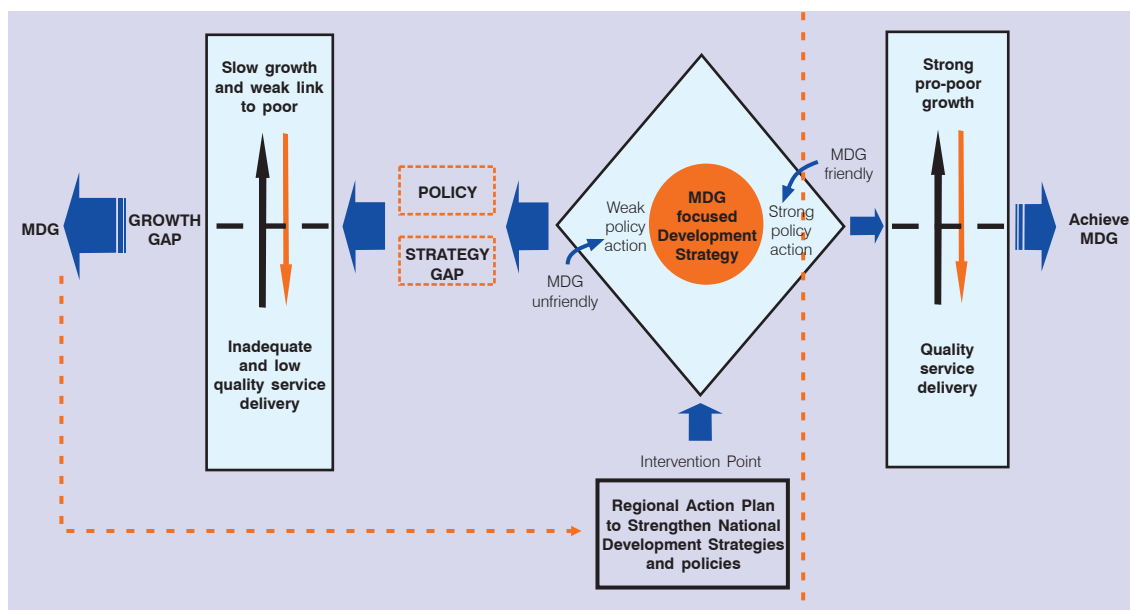
The second way of looking at this is to envisage a ‘growth gap’ – the boost in economic growth that would be needed to meet the MDGs. The right side of the diagram, by contrast, indicates that a well-designed development strategy with MDG-friendly economic and social policies would ensure strong, pro-poor and inclusive growth and provide good quality basic services for the poor.

The impact of income growth

What effect does the rate of economic growth have on each of the MDGs? This can be estimated using standard statistical regression techniques to calculate the ‘MDG elasticity’ – i.e. the percentage change in the MDG indicator for each 1 per cent increase in growth. This has been tested for 11 indicators – primarily those for which there is a reasonably large data set. These and the socio-economic variables are listed in Box 2-1.

The results of the analysis are detailed in Annex 1 and summarized in Figure 2-2. They show that growth has its greatest effect on income poverty: among 25

Figure 2-1 – A conceptual framework



Box 2-1 – Indicators and variables for the gap analysis

The gap analysis is based on the following indicators and variables:

MDG indicators

- Population living on less than \$1 a day
- Poverty gap ratio
- Undernourished population
- Net enrolment ratio of both sexes in primary education
- Primary education completion rate
- Gender parity index in primary, secondary and tertiary level enrolment
- Children under-5 mortality rate
- Infant mortality rate
- Maternal mortality rate

Macroeconomic indicators

- GDP per capita
- Consumer price index
- Trade as a percentage of GDP
- Government final consumption expenditure as percentage of GDP

- Share of agriculture value added in total value added

Population and employment-related indicators

- Total population
- Share of female population
- Share of urban population
- Age dependency ratio
- Employment shares of agriculture, industry and services

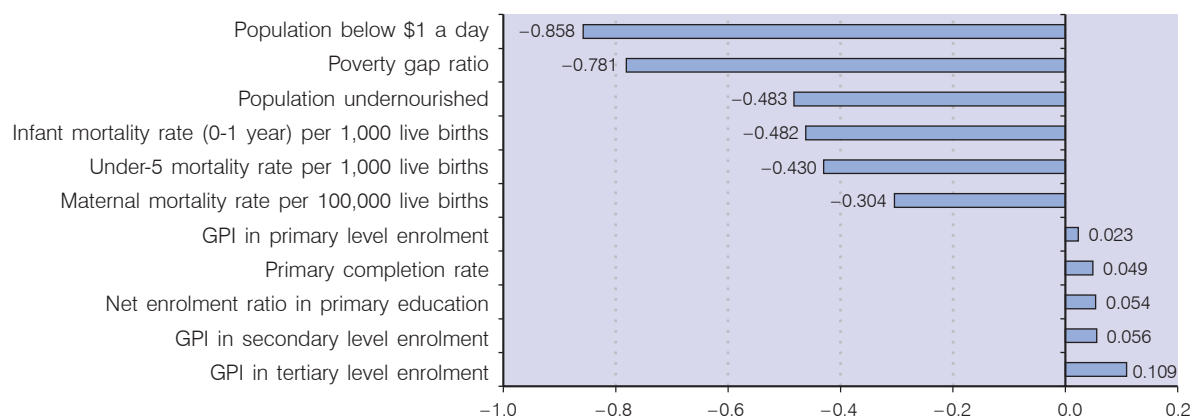
Infrastructure-related indicators

- Share of paved road length in total road length
- Radios and televisions per 1,000 people

Agriculture-related indicators

- Crop production index
- Food production index
- Livestock production index
- Food price index

Figure 2-2 – Impact of a 1 per cent increase in per capita GDP on selected MDG indicators



countries, if per capita income rises by 1 per cent, the headcount poverty ratio tends to fall by 0.86 per cent. Note that this and similar conclusions are based on correlations across a group of countries. They do not consider all the causes and effects. Nor do they mean that for every country a 1 per cent rise in income will consistently produce a 0.86 per cent reduction in poverty. Nevertheless they do suggest possibilities and general orders of magnitude. It should also be emphasized that they are by no means the only factors bearing on those indicators. Many other factors have a bearing on poverty, for example, particularly for women (Box 2.2).

Economic growth also has an impact on undernutrition, though the effect is smaller: a 1 per cent increase in per capita GDP is associated with a drop of about half a percent in undernutrition. Growth also appears to have a smaller effect on infant and under-5 mortality and on maternal mortality. A 1 per cent increase in per capita income is associated with a 0.3 per cent fall in maternal mortality, a 0.43 per cent fall in child mortality, and a 0.46 per cent fall in infant mortality.

Economic growth appears to have considerably less impact on education – on primary enrolment and on primary completion. Growth also has a relatively small effect when it comes improving gender parity in education (GPI), though

it rises with education level. Some evidence suggests that the gains for girls are greatest among higher-income classes who recognize the value of girls' education and act accordingly.

The impact of other variables

Of the other macroeconomic indicators for which data are available, the one with the greatest number of significant correlations with the MDGs is openness to international trade (Figure 2-3). Again the greatest effect appears to be on poverty: a 1 per cent increase in trade as a proportion of GDP is associated with a 0.7 per cent drop in the proportion of people living on less than \$1 per day.

Compared with growth, trade has less effect on mortality, but it does have a significant effect on education, even on primary schooling, perhaps because trade raises the value of skills: trade openness should increase the need for human capital, leading to higher returns for education and health. Conversely, trade can increase the supply of such services and thus help to achieve the relevant MDGs.

It is noticeable too that trade appears to make a difference even for countries at the same level of national income: the degree of trade openness can re-

Box 2-2 – Impact of gender discrimination on poverty

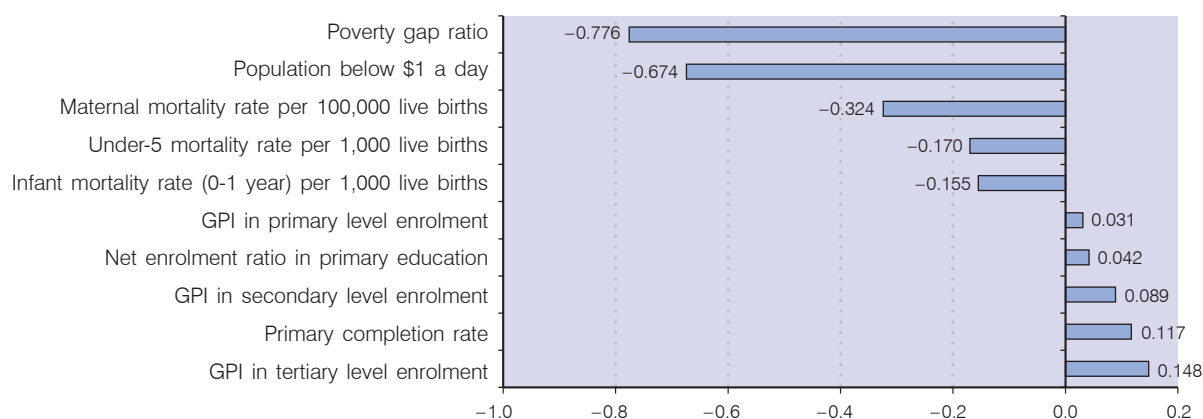
For women, poverty is exacerbated by their unequal access to key resources, such as land, capital and credit. Women also lack employment opportunities, face discrimination in work and pay, lack participation in decision making and generally take subordinate social positions in patriarchal institutions.

Women also face discrimination in property and inheritance rights. They are far less likely than men to own or control assets such as land and

housing. Without official title to land and property, women also have fewer economic options and virtually no collateral for obtaining loans and credit.

To address this imbalance, it is important for countries to amend laws that discriminate against women, complementing these measures with other initiatives such as promoting legal literacy and establishing support groups that can help women to make land claims.

Figure 2-3 – Impact of a 1 per cent increase in trade on selected MDG indicators



duce poverty when income levels are controlled. This may be because differences in trade openness capture differences in the quality of growth (Ahmed and Sattar, 2004; Sawada et al, 2006).

Due to a scarcity of data, the picture for other variables is less complete. The available data are presented in Annex table 1.1 but a few of the results stand out. One concerns the share of agriculture in GNP: a reduction in the share is associated with a significant reduction in poverty. Another concerns the food price index: an increase in the food price or consumer price index is associated with a more than proportionate in-

crease in the percentage of the population undernourished.

The limitations of growth: growth gaps

As these elasticities show, a rise in income is likely to have a beneficial effect on the MDGs. But countries that rely on income alone are likely to fall short for many of the indicators, with what might be called the 'income-only' gaps. These can be calculated by using the growth elasticities discussed in the previous section and applying them to the trend in economic growth. Details of these

gaps are given in Annex tables 1.2 to 1.4. The main findings are as follows:

Poverty and education – In this case the ‘income-only’ gaps are quite low. The gaps or shortfalls are mostly 15 percentage points or less for income poverty, the percentage of undernourished population, net enrolment in primary education, and the primary completion rate. For example, for income poverty, of the 25 countries examined, 17 are likely to fall short of the target, but only in 2 of these will the gap be greater than 15 percentage points.¹

Gender – For educational enrolment, the majority of countries examined have projected gender parity gaps, which rise with level of education. Of the 29 countries, 23 have gaps at the primary level but only in 1 is the gap greater than 0.2. For the secondary level, however, 17 countries have gaps, and in 7 countries these are greater than 0.2. At the tertiary level, 18 countries have gaps and in 13 these are greater than 0.2. There are other serious gaps in the achievement of access to political decision making and to capital, credit and resources.

Health – Dependence on income-only growth will also leaves very large gaps in health-related indicators. Of the 30 countries examined, 27 would miss the maternal mortality target and 12 would do so by more than 100 deaths per 100,000 live births. For under-5 mortality all 30 countries examined will face gaps, mostly of up to 100 per 1,000 live births.

One option for narrowing the gaps would be to boost economic growth. But this gap analysis demonstrates the limitations of such a strategy. Even if all

25 countries increased their projected per capita GDP growth by 3 percentage points – raising it say from 5 to 8 per cent, of the 17 countries currently off-track on the basis of current growth rates, 10 would still fall short of the target for income poverty (Annex table 1.5). The shortfalls for other indicators are likely to be even greater.

For the proportion of the population undernourished, even with this substantial boost in growth only 2 of 19 off-track countries would meet the target. For primary school enrolment only 2 of those 15 falling short would achieve their target and for primary level completion only 2 out of 15. For gender parity in primary enrolment, only 3 out of 17 failing countries would reach their target and for gender parity at secondary enrolment, none out of 18 would do so. Similarly for maternal mortality, for which all 30 countries had a gap, an increase of 3 percentage points would help only one country hit the target.

In practice, increasing per capita income growth by 3 percentage points in these countries is highly unlikely. So economic growth alone is not the solution. Instead, countries will need to improve the structure and quality of economic growth and make appropriate changes to national development strategies.

Assessing national development strategies: filling strategy gaps

To what extent are they making such changes? To assess this, this report carried out a review of 14 Asia-Pacific countries, on the basis of MDG reports, Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers, (PRSPs), Joint Staff Advisory Notes (JSANs) of the World Bank and IMF, and national development plans. Of these 14 countries, 8 had MDG reports, PRSPs and also JSANs – Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Cambodia, Lao PDR, Mongolia, Nepal, Pakistan and Timor-Leste.

¹ These gaps, however, are estimated on the basis of partial effect of per-capita GDP growth only. Impacts of growth in other variables, enabling policies and institutions which have positive contributions to reducing poverty are not considered. Many of these have trend similar to income growth.

Five countries had only MDG reports – China, Maldives, Myanmar, Thailand and Papua New Guinea. One of these countries, Samoa, had only a national development plan (Annex 2).

MDG reports and the PRSPs are inevitably closely related. They cover most of the same indicators and both are prepared through consultations with all stakeholders – which generally includes Ministries of Planning and Finance, concerned line ministries, NGOs,

donors and international organizations (Box 2-3).

The analysis of various reports from the 14 countries showed that while all countries had distinctive features they generally took a common approach. All emphasized the importance of stable, broad-based, inclusive and participatory economic growth. They also covered a wide range of policies, reforms and programmes – which can be grouped under 9 broad headings:

Box 2-3 – The MDG and PRSP processes in Bangladesh

A typical case for the preparation of MDG and PRSP reports is Bangladesh. The 2005 MDG progress report was jointly prepared by the Government and the United Nations Country Team with other stakeholders. The first step was to establish Technical Working Groups (TWGs) which identified relevant MDG targets and indicators and the benchmark year from which the MDGs were to be monitored. The TWGs used econometric models to simulate the rates of growth required to achieve the MDGs, to show whether the country was on track, and to reveal the gaps and challenges.

The report showed considerable progress in a number of areas, including immunization, micro-credit, female economic participation, birth control, physical mobility and safety nets. But some of the most striking achievements have been in primary and girls' education: the country is well on-track for universal primary education. Its main education challenge now is to ensure sufficient financing to keep up the momentum.

The report discusses a number of broad policies, including monetary and fiscal measures, structural reform policies, and sectoral interven-

tions such as infrastructure development, national nutrition programmes, social safety nets, and protection against natural disasters. The MDG report emphasizes the need for strong partnerships at national and global levels both to maintain development assistance and to achieve better access for Bangladesh's exports. However, the report does not detail the programmes, measures and financial resources required to achieve those objectives. Nor does it provide in-depth socioeconomic analysis at the national or sub-national levels.

To complement its MDG Report, Bangladesh also prepared a PRSP which addressed the issues of pro-poor growth and human development. It established 12 groups each of which coordinated the preparation of a thematic background paper. The groups comprised senior officials from the line ministries and Ministries of Finance and Planning. Although the PRSP was prepared entirely by the government, the groups also included observers from NGOs and other civil society groups and donor agencies as well as bilateral donors and international organizations including the World Bank, IMF, ADB, UNDP, UNICEF, UNAIDS and UNFPA.

- Sustaining macroeconomic stability and macro liberalization
- Structural reforms in trade, industry, land, labour and capital markets
- Sectoral priorities for poverty reduction and employment generation
- Development of physical infrastructure and human capital
- Conflict resolution, social development and environmental protection
- Direct poverty alleviation programmes
- Improving legal and institutional frameworks
- External aid coordination and harmonization
- Strengthening systems for measurement, evaluation, monitoring and review

All these areas are interrelated and thus need to be addressed together – though their coverage and intensity will depend on the country’s size, level of economic development and socio-political environment. Appropriate strategies, policies and programmes are indicated in Table 2-1.

To date, countries have loosely adapted the MDGs to fit national budget constraints and priorities. To be effective, however, national MDG strategies should be ‘needs based,’ setting out national targets and priorities that are consistent with reaching the MDGs. Governments have to make efforts to mobilize domestic resources and can then request donors to fill any remaining financing gaps. Donors, however, also point out that for a country’s MDG strategy to be useful as a guide to MDG action, it should be linked to the national budget, setting out clear priorities for public expenditure based on a realistic assessment of the available resources.

The importance of good governance

The effectiveness of all these activities will depend critically on the quality of governance. The Millennium Declaration, which gave rise to the Millennium Development Goals, stresses the importance of good governance. This has 8 major characteristics: participation; the rule of law; transparency; responsiveness to public will and needs; consensus orientation; equity and inclusiveness; effectiveness and efficiency; and accountability. A process of decision making and implementation with these characteristics will incorporate the views of minorities and the most vulnerable – empowering them to become agents of their own development. It also helps ensure that the right policy choices are made that minimizes corruption thus saving resources.

Good governance can help overcome many income and non-income barriers. Much of this will involve changing decision-making processes at the national level, cutting through the bureaucratic jungle of laws, and exploring more effective forms of service delivery. However, in some cases it will also involve decentralization of power and authority from higher to lower tiers of government – and broadening the range of basic service providers to include community organizations, non-governmental organizations and the private sector. Governments always retain the primary and ultimate responsibility for ensuring that everyone has access to basic services at all times, but in some cases they can concentrate more on creating a suitable environment – encouraging the involvement of a range of providers, while setting standards and carrying that functions of regulation and monitoring.

Good governance is also open and accountable. A number of countries have, for example, experimented with public hearings and require government functionaries to publicly justify their actions

Table 2-1 – Common policies and programmes in 14 Asia-Pacific countries

<i>Sustaining macroeconomic stability and macro liberalization policies to enhance growth, reduce poverty and generate employment</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fiscal and budgetary reforms and policies Monetary and credit policies Medium-term fiscal sustainability Public expenditure reforms Medium-term expenditure frameworks or expenditure projections
<i>Structural reforms to enhance productivity and efficiency, and to impart dynamism to the overall growth process</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reduction and rationalization of customs duties and export promotion Decontrol, delicensing and deregulation of industrial production and investment Public enterprise reform and privatization Private sector development and public-private partnerships Labour market reforms Financial and capital market reforms Micro-finance and micro-insurance schemes
<i>Sectoral priorities for poverty reduction and employment generation</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Development of agriculture and irrigation Development of employment-intensive and agro-based industries Development of small and medium-sized enterprises
<i>Development of efficient physical infrastructure and skilled human capital</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Infrastructure development – power, transport, telecommunications, water and sanitation Social-sector development – education and health Forestry policy
<i>Conflict resolution, social development and environmental protection</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Community participation Control of pollution and environmental hazards Economic and social security measures Mainstreaming women and excluded groups through reservations in parliament
<i>Direct poverty alleviation programmes for target groups</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Targeted employment-generation programmes Food-for-work programmes, public works programmes for local communities Housing programmes for the poor
<i>Improving the legal and institutional framework</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Good governance and strengthening institutions Civil service and administrative reforms Decentralization and local governance Devolution of resources and implementation of sub-national programmes Strengthening the anti-corruption strategy with greater transparency and accountability Legal and judicial reform
<i>External aid coordination and harmonization</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Establishing the need for external resources Aid coordination and harmonization Enhancing absorptive capacity Encouraging foreign direct investment
<i>Strengthening systems for measurement, evaluation, monitoring and review</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improving concepts, measurement and analysis of poverty Poverty monitoring and mapping Output and outcome budgeting

and expenditure. Others, as in India, have promoted the right to information, requiring details of many government actions to be published, and empowering citizens to demand certain types of data.

Good governance also has implications for the environment, since it enables countries to balance the needs of economic growth with those of environmental protection. As countries get richer they typically raise their standards, investing heavily in cleaning up water supplies, for example, and in better sanitation. And as their economies become more sophisticated they may also shift gear – for example from making steel or chemicals to manufacturing computer chips or to expanding services. But these changes are not automatic; they have to be supplemented by good governance that gives a high priority to environmental concerns. Many good governance factors help improve environmental performance, particularly a system of checks and balances, reliable data, and transparent administration. Indeed, when economic growth is combined with good governance, it can strengthen environmental protection and combat climate change.

Macroeconomic policies: addressing policy gaps

Raising standards of governance will also assist countries in their efforts to achieve ‘pro-poor’ growth. Growth is pro-poor if the poor gain a greater share in national income. It also implies a process where growth occurs for the poor and is generated by the poor in their localities.

There is no inherent trade off between poverty reduction and economic growth. Indeed, if growth is pro-poor it will be more inclusive and sustainable, starting a virtuous cycle of MDG achievement and economic growth. A high rate of economic growth increases the capacity of countries to mobilize resources for funding these interventions, though their

success also depends on the political will of government leaders to pursue such initiatives effectively. Box 2-4 shows examples of specific interventions.

Economic policies which enable pro-MDG economic growth can be classified in 4 broad groups: economy-wide institutional and policy reforms, macroeconomic stabilization, sectoral policies and interventions and pro-poor expenditures and revenue policies.

Economy-wide institutional and policy reforms

When developing countries are aiming to stimulate economic growth, they typically adopt a standard set of policies: privatization, deregulation, liberalization of trade and the financial sector, and capital account convertibility. They trust that these measures will unleash the entrepreneurship and dynamism of the private sector, both domestic and foreign, and enhance competition and efficiency. The aim is to exploit the country’s comparative advantages – increasing exports and attracting foreign capital, especially direct foreign investment.

But such policies can also harm the poor, at least in the short to medium term. The first phase of privatization in the 1970s and 1980s, for example, led to massive lay-offs, thus increasing poverty and threatening the MDGs. Reforms therefore need to be accompanied by complementary policies, with active labour market interventions to maximize employment, along with robust safety nets to protect the most vulnerable.

Macroeconomic stabilization policies

Governments pursuing macroeconomic stabilization are generally aiming for low inflation. This involves fiscal and monetary discipline, reducing both fiscal and current account deficits, keeping real exchange rates stable and interest rates moderate. In this way they hope

Box 2-4 – Policy interventions for achieving the MDGs

Goal 1 (Poverty & hunger)

- Public expenditure on economic and social infrastructure
- Interventions for social, economic and political inclusion, such as public works to generate employment, enabling effective political participation of women through legislation.
- Employment-intensive development; industrial policies to support SMEs and micro enterprises.
- Effective food distribution systems

Goal 2 (Education)

- Special education needs to address different levels of ability.
- Access to formal and vocational education for all children.
- Appointing good quality teachers as well as expenditure on school infrastructure.
- Revenue mobilization for financing education, use of dedicated tax for education; community co-funding.
- Use of targeted interventions such as food-for-work programmes.

Goal 3 (Gender & empowerment)

- Review of gender discriminatory laws.
- Protection through labour laws and anti-trafficking programmes.
- Health protection for women in formal or informal employment; health care services and low-cost insurance schemes
- Preventing gender-based discrimination and abuse at the place of work.

Goal 4 (Children's health)

- Interventions such as immunization, micronutrient supplementation, deworming, diarrhoea control
- Proactive changes in cultural elements including adverse attitudes to girl children
- Changes in feeding practices and child care.

Goal 5 (Maternal health)

- Increased number of skilled birth attendants, and better emergency obstetric care, with better family and community support.
- Addressing cultural norms such as the minimum marriageable age
- Universal access to sexual and reproductive health information.

Goal 6 (HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases)

- Access to essential drugs, and changing cultural practices such as building awareness to use medicated bed nets.
- Integration of reproductive health with HIV/AIDS services.

Goal 7 (Water, sanitation and slum dwellings)

- Social marketing of good sanitation
- Promoting participative approaches to reach the socially excluded.
- Introducing affordable 'prices' for drinking water to contribute to cost recovery and avoid wasting water.

to boost consumer and investor confidence and encourage economic activity and growth. Lower inflation should also assist the poor if it helps keep down the price of food which represents a high proportion of their household budgets.

However, there can also be disadvantages to keeping a tight rein on inflation. The traditional 'Washington Consensus' interpretation of macroeconomic stabilization often overemphasized low inflation and demand management at the expense of growth and development. For example, efforts to reduce the fiscal deficit by cutting public expenditure, especially on physical and social infrastructure, can easily restrain short- and medium-term growth. Often a better approach is to focus on supply management, for example stabilizing food prices through increasing food availability – which will benefit the poor.

Sectoral policies and interventions

One of the most important sectors for poverty reduction is agriculture which employs substantial quantities of labour, one of the chief resources of the poor. Policies to promote agriculture include investments in rural infrastructure, irrigation networks, farm-to-market roads, and rural electrification. Strengthening rural infrastructure in this way not only increases the income of the poor but also widens access to services and thus helps to achieve the other MDG goals.

Pro-poor expenditures and revenue policies

As well as promoting growth, governments will also want to ensure that its benefits improve the position of the poor. To achieve this they will need to change the structure of taxes, correct pro-rich subsidies, and allocate public expenditure so as to increase the availability of services and ensure that priority sectors have access to bank credit.

Providing MDG goods and services

As indicated earlier, economic growth has a major and direct impact on Goal 1 by helping to reduce poverty, but has rather less impact on other Goals 2 to 7, which depend more on people being able to consume certain goods and services. To reduce maternal mortality, for example, pregnant women need to visit antenatal clinics and have access to emergency obstetric services. To increase enrolment, pupils have to be able to attend schools. In short, people need to be able to consume what might be called 'MDG goods and services' (Sarkar, 2007).

Often they are prevented from accessing these services by non-income factors. Some obstacles may be legal: if children lack birth certificates they may not get access to health or education services. Other hindrances may derive from social practices and customs. For example, in many Asia-Pacific countries, pregnant women even from relatively rich families do not regularly visit medical clinics, and many are deterred by the prospect of examination by male doctors. And in some societies people are denied access to services as a result of discrimination on the basis of gender, caste, or ethnic origin. People with disabilities will often face physical barriers and people infected with HIV can find it difficult to receive health treatment. Those who live and work in the informal sector may be excluded from all sorts of entitlements and social security.

In addition, there are supply constraints – due to the weak capacity of service providers and the low quality of services which are often scant in remote areas. This in turn generates costs for the poor. For example, absence of health clinics and hospitals nearby will compel people to walk or hire transport – increasing the implicit price and inhibiting consumption. The absence of proper road infrastructure will further add to the cost.

If economic growth is accompanied by improvements in both physical and social infrastructure, it will thus promote the MDGs. This should be a self-reinforcing process: expansion in the MDG goods and services sectors can also act an engine of growth, turning 'pro-MDG growth' into 'pro-growth MDGs'.

Benchmarking public policies

To what extent have governments been pursuing pro-MDG growth? Given the shortage of data, this can be difficult to judge. This section attempts to assess this with an analysis of 27 countries across the region. It draws on country data for the period 1999 to 2005 compiled from the World Development Indicators 2006 (Annex table 3.1). To avoid annual volatility it uses average values of the indicators over the period 2000-2005.

The indicator corresponding to a particular policy variable is calculated using a number of associated indicators (Annex 3). The financial indicator, for

example, is an average of 3 indicators: M3 as percentage of GDP; domestic credit as a percentage of GDP; the number of bank branches per 100,000 people.

For purposes of comparison, this analysis selects 2 countries as benchmarks. One is China which has made exemplary progress in boosting economic growth and reducing poverty. The other is Thailand, which has already achieved some of the MDGs and is on track to achieve many more. Some benchmarks are those of China; the others are from Thailand (Annex table 3.2).

Other countries are then measured against these benchmarks. The scale of the task facing each country is assessed by considering how far it is from the benchmark, the gap being expressed as a percentage of the benchmark value. These gaps highlight the main problems – the size of the gap indicating the priority each area should receive (Box 2-5).

The analysis considers 21 indicators grouped into 7 policy areas – macro, fiscal, finance, trade, business, health

Box 2-5 – Limitations of the benchmarking methodology

Like any form of economic analysis the benchmarking methodology used in this chapter has its limitations. One concerns the selection of benchmark countries, since that choice inevitably affects the outcome. There are also difficulties in interpreting the results. For example, this approach which takes benchmark countries as 'good models', assumes that other countries will get similar MDG outcome from similar actions, though the national development context is often very different.

Another issue is the weight accorded to each indicator. This analysis as-

sumes they all have equal value. Thus, if there is a 45 per cent gap in the ratio of health expenditure to GDP, but only a 30 per cent gap in the tax to GDP ratio, the implication is that increasing health expenditure should have a higher priority than increasing tax buoyancy. It could be argued, however, that tax issues should start out with an initially heavier weighting given its importance for boosting public revenues. Nevertheless, with a careful selection of benchmarks, this form of analysis can be a useful way of identifying priorities for assistance, both financial and technical.

and education – each of which is accorded equal weight. For particular country, the area with the largest gap is identified as Priority I, the next Priority II, and so on. For example, comparing Bangladesh with China and Thailand produced a 69 per cent gap in finance but a 55 per cent gap in macro. In Bangladesh, Priority I was finance, Priority II was fiscal and Priority III was education.

The results of this analysis are aggregated for the 27 countries in Table 2-2.

The first row shows that the most important priority in 13 countries is finance, while in 11 countries it is macroeconomic policy, in 2 it is education while in only 1 it is trade. Correspondingly, the second row shows that in 6 countries the second priority area was macroeconomic policy, while in 7 others it was finance and in 5 others it was health. Overall, the main priority areas are finance, the macroeconomy, education, trade and health. These 4 areas thus represent a menu, for any regional assistance strategy.

Table 2-2 – Priorities revealed by the gap analysis, number of countries

Priority I	Finance (13)	Macro (11)	Education (2)	Trade (1)	-	-	-
Priority II	Macro (7)	Finance (6)	Health (5)	Education (4)	Business (3)	Fiscal (2)	
Priority III	Fiscal (7)	Business (5)	Health (5)	Education (4)	Macro (3)	Finance (2)	Trade (1)
Priority IV	Fiscal (7)	Business (7)	Education (6)	Finance (2)	Trade (2)	Macro (2)	Health (1)
Priority V	Fiscal (7)	Business (5)	Education (4)	Health (4)	Macro (3)	Trade (2)	Finance (2)
Priority VI	Health (9)	Business (6)	Education (5)	Fiscal (3)	Macro (2)	Trade (1)	Finance (1)
Priority VII	Trade (19)	Fiscal (3)	Business (2)	Health (2)	Education (1)		

Note: This table is based on a gap analysis in 27 countries: Bangladesh, Bhutan, Cambodia, China, Fiji, India, Indonesia, Kazakhstan, Lao PDR, Malaysia, Maldives, Mongolia, Myanmar, Nepal, Pakistan, Papua New Guinea, Philippines, Republic of Korea, Russian Federation, Samoa, Singapore, Solomon Islands, Sri Lanka, Thailand, Tonga, Vanuatu and Viet Nam.

Filling the implementation gap

Poor progress towards achieving MDGs is often due to a gap between commitment and implementation. All stakeholders need to pay attention to this but governments, the United Nations system and the international community in particular need to fulfil their various promises – making aid more predictable and effective and forging stronger country- and regional-level programmes in support of the MDGs.

The United Nations and other global forums have discussed these implementation gaps in detail. In his report, *Towards Achieving Internationally Agreed Development Goals, including Those Contained in the Millennium Declaration*, the Secretary-General made recommendations that are equally applicable at the regional level. In 2005, at the 59th General Assembly, all countries committed themselves to adopt 'by 2006 and begin to implement comprehensive national development strategies to achieve the internationally agreed development goals and objectives including the Mil-

lennium Development Goals by 2015'. So far, few have followed through on this commitment.

What needs to be done? First, governments must back the MDGs fully at national and international levels, setting out achievable targets, clear timelines and practical strategies. Second, they will have to break out of the limited sectoral approach to encompass a more integrated framework. Finally, they should institute systems for continuous monitoring and evaluation to ensure that implementation remains on-track and that some goals are not pursued at the expense of others.

At the country level, this means that governments need to establish clear MDG strategies and budgets. At the regional level, all the United Nations agencies and the development banks have to establish a stronger partnerships to make optimum use of their combined financial, technical and human resources.

Costing the MDGs: addressing financial gaps

A critical step in devising MDG policies is making realistic estimates of the costs so that these can be fully incorporated into national budgets. The direct costs include those for creating essential facilities: reaching health targets, for example, involves building more hospitals and clinics, providing medicines and equipment, and appointing sufficient doctors and nurses. The indirect costs can be even more diverse, ranging from building rural roads to investing in advocacy aimed at reducing gender discrimination against women.

In the least developed countries in particular, where the private sector is often weak, such investment will come almost entirely from government. But governments too will find it difficult to invest, since national savings are typically low

and tax revenues limited. Many LDCs also already in debt so further large-scale borrowing is impossible. The inevitable result is a large MDG resource gap.

One of the first priorities therefore is to measure the gap – to estimate how much it will cost to meet each of the MDGs. With this information, governments can make better choices between different pro-poor strategies and policy options, and make more accurate needs forecasts that can be used to justify additional foreign aid. The aim should be to align MDG targets with national budgets, sectoral plans and foreign aid.

Cost estimates should address institutional constraints and set out priorities to permit adjustments in the light of resource availability. They must be based on realistic assessments and be presented in a form that can support resource bids. When these estimates have been prepared and governments have made reasonable efforts to mobilize domestic resources, donors can then be urged to fill the gaps.

Several approaches have been developed to estimate the costs of the MDGs, at the global, national and sectoral levels. The World Bank, for example, has been estimating the costs of attaining Goals in the off-track countries – assuming a conducive policy and institutional environment. For the whole world, it has estimated the cost to donors of achieving Goal 1 – reducing income poverty and under nutrition – at \$54 billion to \$62 billion a year. For the other goals, it has estimated the global costs as \$35 billion to \$76 billion per year. However, it stresses that in order to avoid 'double-counting' these two sets of figures should not be aggregated since achieving Goal 1 will help to achieve the other goals.

A background paper for the UNDP's *Human Development Report 2003* took a broadly similar approach. It estimated

the annual investment cost of generating poverty-reducing increases in output in developing countries at \$76 billion – higher than the upper range of the World Bank’s estimates (Reddy and Heuty, 2005).

The World Bank has also estimated the financial requirements of achieving gender equality and women’s empowerment. For Bangladesh, over the period 2006-2015, it concluded that this would require at least \$57 billion and for Cambodia \$7 billion. The cost of meeting gender targets is of course closely linked with the costs of achieving all the other MDGs since over 90 per cent of the costs associated with achieving gender equality and women’s empowerment would be investments in sectoral programmes such as health and education (Box 2-4).

An Asia-Pacific needs assessment

One effort to measure this at the national level in certain countries has been undertaken by UNDP: the MDG Needs Assessment (NA). This aims to estimate all types of resources required to achieve the MDGs and includes a monitoring and accountability framework.

This NA typically takes a bottom-up approach, with wide consultation across stakeholders. Key steps include identifying interventions, setting targets, costing them, and then linking them to the national development strategy. The assessment involves all types of inputs or resources – financial, human and infrastructure. These are estimated using Excel-based tools developed by the United Nations Millennium Project and other United Nations agencies.

The NA and costing tools cover a number of thematic areas including agriculture, education, health, HIV/AIDS, energy, water and sanitation, environment and transportation. For gender, environment, ICT, governance and community development, the NA follows a

two-pronged approach (i) incorporating the costings in sectoral needs assessments and (ii) conducting a separate NA for stand-alone interventions, policies and institutions. A separate tool has been developed for independent costing of HIV responses, but this can also be integrated with the health tool.

The NA has not developed a tool for the income poverty target. This is due to the multi-dimensional nature of poverty which is contingent upon many factors such as the overall rate, composition and employment intensity of growth and patterns of distribution. Such an estimate would require a macroeconomic model or framework to identify how much poverty reduction can occur with a given level of investment.

So far only a limited number of countries in the Asia-Pacific region have completed detailed assessments. Bhutan, Mongolia, Nepal, Pakistan and Tajikistan have carried out complete NAs. In addition there have been assessments in Bangladesh and Cambodia by the United Nations Millennium Project. A summary of the results in some countries is shown in Table 2-3.

As indicated in Table 2-3, the costs per capita per year can vary considerably, from a low of \$45 for Nepal to \$321 for Mongolia. Note, however, that this table can only give a general impression. Per capita costs are not directly comparable across countries as there are national differences in coverage, definition, and the base year for constant price reference. Moreover, the costing in Nepal does not cover as many areas as in other countries, so its figures appear exceptionally low.

Although the per capita cost numbers differ, it is clear that the education, health, agriculture, and road and energy sectors comprise almost four-fifths of the MDG investment requirements. In some countries, education and health alone comprise nearly three-fifths.

Table 2-3 – MDG investment requirements, \$ per capita, based on needs assessments

	<i>Bangladesh</i>		<i>Bhutan</i>		<i>Cambodia</i>		<i>Mongolia</i>		<i>Nepal</i>		<i>Tajikistan</i>	
	<i>2006</i>	<i>2015</i>	<i>2006</i>	<i>2015</i>	<i>2006</i>	<i>2015</i>	<i>2006</i>	<i>2015</i>	<i>2005</i>	<i>2015</i>	<i>2005</i>	<i>2015</i>
Hunger rural development	2	8	39.7	88.5	4	13	54	79	12.4	22	68.5	82.1
Education	11	25	61.8	120.6	15	22	71	178	13.9	21.2	12.9	28.7
Gender	2	3	2.8	6.3	2	3	4	6	0.3	1.2	0.8	2
Health	13	30	46.5	98.3	14	32	84	122	7.4	12.5	24	59.1
Water-sanitation	4	6	21	26.6	3	8	29	21	5.6	8.5	11.4	12.3
Slums	2	4	-	-	3	4	31	41	-	-	-	-
Energy	20	20	35.1	37.2	9	23	27	33				
Roads	12	31	46.5	78	12	31	13	20	5.9	5.3	-	-
Environment	-		0.1	0.1	-	-	8	19	-	-	0.4	3.6
Other	8	13	7.6	7.9	8	13	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total	74	140	261	463.7	70	149	321	568	45.4	70.7	118	187.8

Sources: UN Millennium Project (2005). "Investing in Development: A Practical Plan to Achieve the MDGs", UNDP, University of Zambia, UNDP BDP and UNDP RCC.

Based on the costings for these countries, it should also be possible to extend this analysis to make a rough estimate of the MDG resource gap for the group of all least developed countries in the Asia-Pacific region. The methodology for this is detailed in Annex 4. The results are summarized in Table 2-4.

These results have to be interpreted cautiously due to limitations in the estimation process and data, but they provide useful guidance for national governments and donors. To achieve the non-income MDGs, the LDCs in the Asia-Pacific region would require an

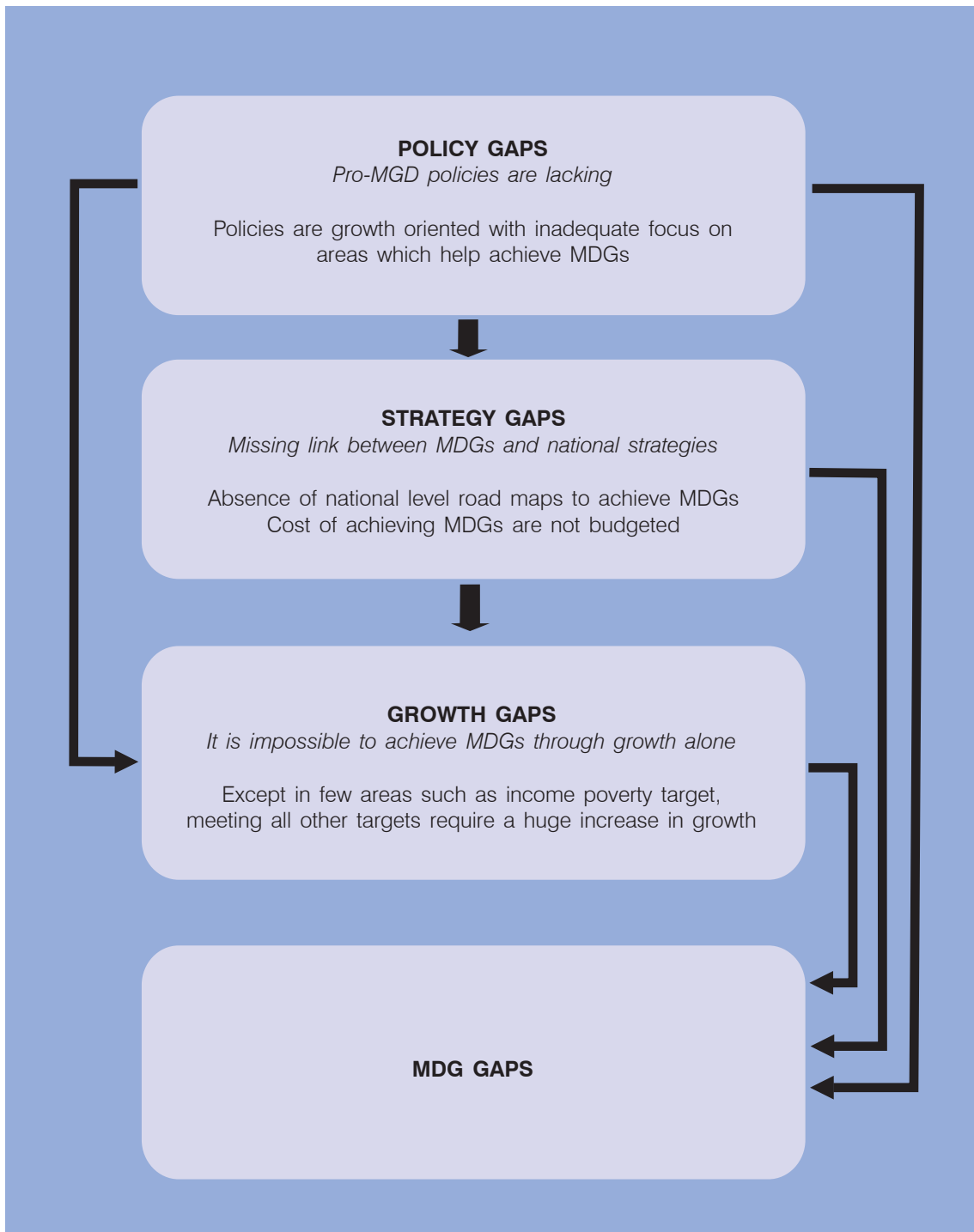
Table 2-4 – MDG resource gap in Asia-Pacific LDCs

	<i>Resource requirement</i>	<i>Resources available</i>	<i>Resource gap</i>
Total (\$ billion)	66	58	8
Per capita (\$)	241	212	29

additional investment of \$8 billion annually, or \$ 29 per capita, until 2015. The needs are greatest in health (21 per cent of total), education (20 per cent) and hunger (20 per cent).²

² Following similar methodology, it has been estimated that the resource gap for 29 countries with access to concessional Asian Development Fund resources of ADB could be around \$25 billion per annum.

Figure 2-4 – Connections between the gaps



Connected gaps

This chapter has demonstrated that the region faces the prospect of a number of gaps which explains the ultimate MDG gaps. Some could be called growth gaps, or strategy gaps, or policy gaps, but all are interrelated (Figure 2-4). Filling them will require renewed determination, imagination and finance. It will also depend on greater regional cooperation, which is the subject of the final chapter.

Policy gaps – Governments do not follow pro-MDG policies – Policies focus only on economic growth rather than on areas that help achieve the MDGs.

Strategy gaps – There is a missing link between national development strategies and the MDGs. Countries lack national MDG road maps and fail to budget for the costs of achieving the MDGs.

Growth gaps – Countries have to increase current growth rates for achieving MDGs. Countries cannot achieve the MDGs through growth alone. They may be able to use growth to meet targets for income poverty, but meeting the other targets in this way would require unfeasible rates of growth.

MDG gaps – Estimated gaps in MDGs if the current growth rate in the countries continue.

3. Following a regional road map and delivering as one

Countries will be unable to achieve the MDGs through growth alone, they will also need to provide good quality services and address various forms of social exclusion. However, they need not act in isolation. They can also join forces with international organizations in regional partnerships – to share knowledge, build capacity, mobilize financial resources and monitor progress.

Earlier chapters have exposed a series of MDG gaps – in policy, strategy, implementation and resources. All of these need to be filled, and since they are interlinked they should be tackled in an integrated fashion. The primary responsibility for doing so lies with national governments which will prepare the necessary ‘road maps’. But they should also be able to seek the support of international organizations active in the Asia-Pacific region – the agencies and funds of the United Nations, the regional development banks and the bilateral donors.

In strengthening national actions, the international community can offer support at two levels. First, it can provide individual, country-level assistance for implementing road maps at the national level. Second, it can work with many countries simultaneously, following a regional road map to encourage the exchange of specialized expertise and experience, address resource gaps, tackle cross-border issues, undertake comparative reviews and monitor achievements.

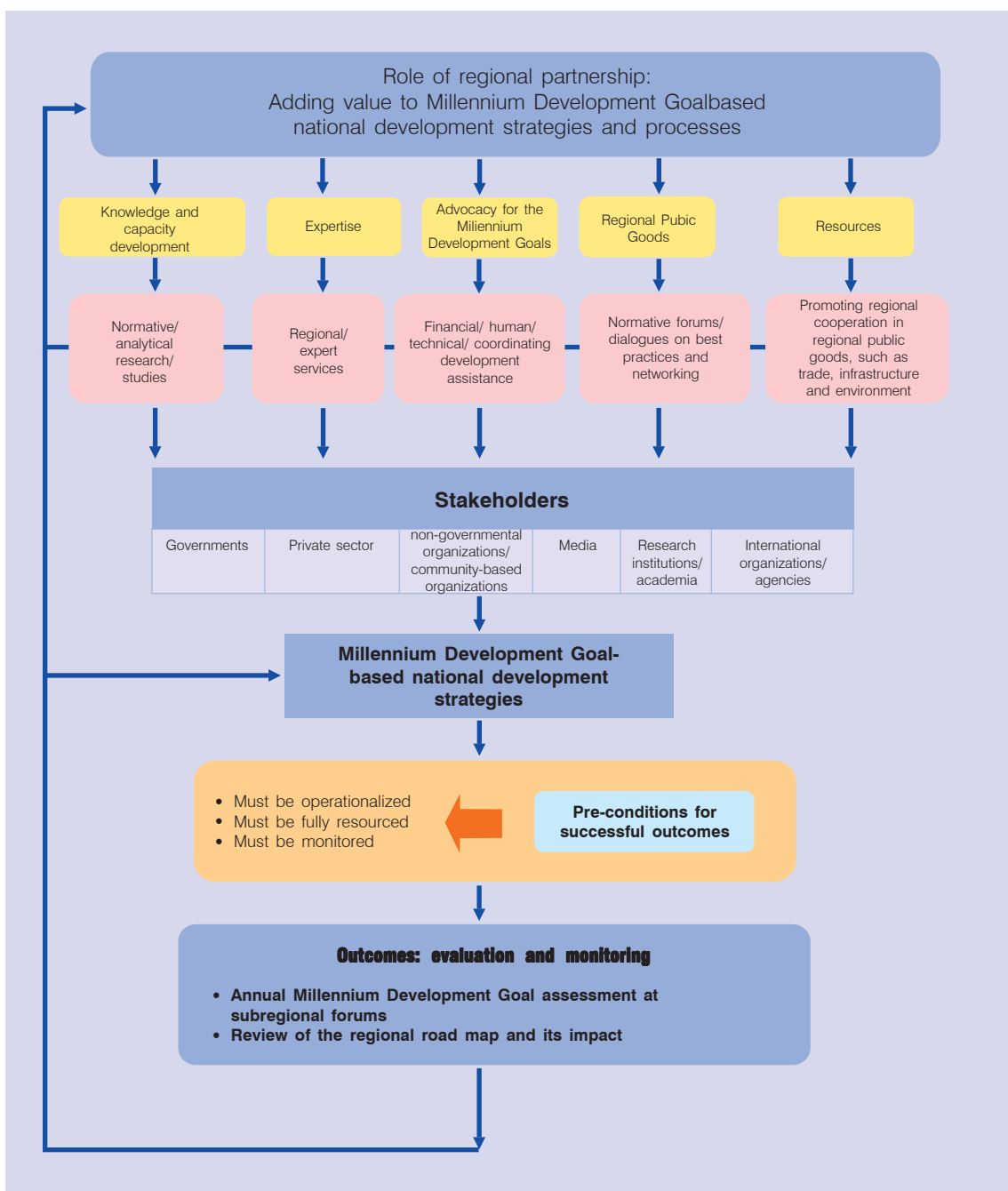
Since this approach involves a number of different institutions, it is vital that they work in unison, transforming development assistance into a coordinated and inclusive regional programme capable of adding value to national endeavours. ESCAP, UNDP and ADB are already working together and are being joined by other United Nations agencies. These efforts will be redoubled and institutionalized through various channels, particularly the Regional Coordination Mechanism.

This chapter considers how they can maximize their joint impact by following a regional road map. In 2006, member countries of ESCAP expressed the wish for such a document (ESCAP, 2006), and an outline was presented in May 2007 to the sixty-third session of the Commission where it received widespread endorsement. The first stage will involve coordinating the activities of ESCAP, UNDP, ADB and the United Nations agencies in general. The second stage will bring in subregional organizations such as ASEAN, SAARC, ECO and FORSEC.

The road map has 3 parts. First, it identifies priority areas where progress towards MDGs is slow or lacking. Second, it lays out a strategy with a number of products and services that can be delivered by the regional partnership. Third, it establishes processes of monitoring and evaluation to allow for course corrections. The framework is designed to be dynamic; as time goes, on each component is expected to highlight different priorities and emphases.

The five major components of the regional partnership, and the interconnections between them, are illustrated in Figure 3-1. The components are: knowledge and capacity-building, expertise, advocacy, regional public goods and resources. All should add value to national strategies and should be developed in consultation with national stakeholders, including government departments, the private sector, non-governmental and community-based organizations, the media and academia.

Figure 3-1 – A regional partnership for the MDGs



Knowledge and capacity-building

With their normative and analytical research capabilities, the regional partners can achieve significant economies of scale in accumulating and organizing knowledge and information. They can, for example, assess progress using data from various international organizations, with a particular emphasis on gender-disaggregated data. They can also estimate the resource requirements – human, institutional and financial. In addition, the partners can use this information to identify opportunities for regional and subregional cooperation, and areas and sectors for public-private-donor investments and interventions. This should ensure that policy makers, experts and professionals are well informed and better able to use public and private resources, including development assistance.

The end result could be a regional MDG knowledge hub under which a range of activities could be conducted:

- *Monitoring progress* – Identifying achievements and obstacles and suggesting policy options and programmes that can contribute to the achievement of targets
- *Reviewing national plans* – Identifying best practices and areas of common concern.
- *Assessing gaps* – Periodically analyzing fiscal, monetary and external-sector regimes for policy gaps, including resource gaps which have implications for achieving MDGs
- *Costing* – Macro modelling and MDG costing exercises.

While these activities are likely to be undertaken by different agencies, their coordination through a regional mechanism could enable governments to locate the agencies in one place to which they could direct requests pertaining to their specific countries or issues.

Expertise

Each country has its own body of expertise, but many could benefit from assistance in specific areas especially in complex programmes and projects funded through development assistance. For this, they should also be able to take advantage of advisory services at various stages – from formulation and implementation to monitoring and evaluation. These services would allow local and external experts to work together and help ensure better project outcomes.

This would cover, for example, advice on projects involving water and sanitation, transport and communications, tackling HIV/AIDS, delivering child-health services, building microcredit institutions, developing new services in the financial system for small and medium-sized enterprises, improving trade intelligence and facilitation, disaggregating statistics and implementing gender strategies.

Each of the participating partners has relevant expertise. ADB, for example, has direct experience in funding many types of project in infrastructure, environment, regional cooperation and other areas of development and ESCAP and UNDP have substantial know-how in addressing a range of sector-level issues, including pro-poor public-private partnerships, cross-border infrastructure and the promotion of regional integration. The United Nations specialized agencies have a wealth of highly skilled persons who can provide professional services.

A regional advisory service mechanism

For obtaining expertise from their traditional development partners, many countries already have elaborate and well-honed approaches that are regularly reviewed and updated. These systems could, however, be supplemented by a coordinated regional advisory service mechanism. This could serve as a source of experts who could augment

local expertise. The advisers could also help build national capacity and disseminate up-to-date knowledge and information through research studies and papers as well as by participating in national, regional and international meetings.

A regional advisory service mechanism would need to be anchored in the regional partnership. ESCAP, UNDP and ADB have already established a Regional MDG Resource Facility which includes knowledge sharing, coordination and joint planning. A mechanism could form an integral part of this and be coordinated through professional facilitators. Advisory services could be provided on-line – with a database of all available expert services. The initial list of experts would be provided by the regional partners, supplemented with suggestions from other organizations and agencies. Member countries could submit advisory requests through an interactive discussion forum.

Advocacy

Achieving the MDGs will require the combined participation of many institutions. With so many people involved, there is always the danger that the process will become fragmented and lose momentum. To help maintain commitment, the partnership will therefore have a strong advocacy component. For example, to strengthen regional and subregional cooperation, it would be useful to convene a series of regional and subregional MDG forums. These could act as platforms for reviewing MDG achievements and the implementation of the regional road map, while exchanging information and expertise and disseminating the findings of analytical reports.

Just as important, such forums would create opportunities for different kinds of networking, allowing governments, international organizations, NGOs and representatives of community organiza-

tions to form new alliances and work together more effectively.

MDG parliamentary forums

Achieving the MDGs requires strong political will, so it is vital to ensure the participation of parliamentarians and other elected representatives. At present, however, many have incomplete knowledge about the MDGs. To address this issue a meeting of parliamentarians was held in November 2007 to brainstorm on parliamentary advocacy for the MDGs. Five further thematic forums will be held in 2008 at regional and subregional levels under the United Nations Millennium Campaign. These will address the following themes: poverty reduction and hunger, gender, education, health and environmental sustainability. These forums will involve people who are directly engaged in policy, budget and legislative processes for achieving specific MDG targets and indicators and will afford parliamentarians opportunities to meet with other stakeholders, including local authorities, private-sector representatives, civil-society actors, academics and the media. When their output has been consolidated, these forums could feed into the preparation of a comprehensive policy advocacy tool for parliamentarians.

The end result should be better 'MDG governance' – with the necessary systems of oversight, representation and accountability and appropriate budgets. With access to training and orientation programmes, parliamentarians, both men and women, should be better able to formulate the necessary legislation and policy in compliance with international treaties.

There should also be opportunities to involve parliamentarians from donor countries – who could visit 'off-track' countries to see the potential impact of official development assistance and help mobilize additional financial resources.

Regional public goods

While most public goods are nationally based, a number have a strong international element and can be strengthened by regional cooperation. They include infrastructure such as energy security networks, cross-border transport networks, transit facilities for landlocked countries, and water transport between island developing countries. Countries also need to cooperate on cross-border

environmental problems, including haze and forest fires, and health hazards such as communicable diseases. Neighbouring countries can also work together on the prevention, early warning and management of natural disasters (Box 3-1). A regional partnership can play a supportive role in all these issues, for example in formulating agreements and treaties on cross-border issues, and promoting cross-country campaigns such as those for green growth.

Box 3-1 – Disaster risk reduction for the MDGs

Disasters can wipe out decades of development and hamper progress towards the Millennium Development Goals. This is a major concern in Asia and the Pacific, which in 2007 had 8 out of 10 countries with the highest disaster deaths – 4,234 people were killed in Bangladesh by cyclone Sidr and more than 3,000 fatalities from severe floods in Bangladesh, China, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and India.

The intensity and frequency of disasters are being exacerbated by climatic variability and global warming. These environmental hazards have a clear link with poverty since their greatest effects are on the poor and vulnerable, who have the least capacity to cope and are unlikely to have any form of insurance. In Aceh, Indonesia, the 2004 tsunami is estimated to have increased the proportion of people living below the poverty line from 30 to 50 per cent.

Nevertheless, all governments, even the poorest, have options for lowering risk and vulnerability. This means

making sure that disaster risk reduction is integrated with development planning and is high on the agendas of key sectors, such as education, agriculture, and health.

Guiding principles for disaster risk reduction are embodied in the Hyogo Framework for Action: Building the Resilience of Communities and Nations to Disasters, 2005-2015. This establishes 5 key priorities that encompass the 8 MDGs.

1. Ensure that disaster risk reduction is a national and a local priority with a strong institutional basis for implementation.
2. Identify, assess and monitor disaster risks – and enhance early warning.
3. Use knowledge, innovation, and education to build a culture of safety and resilience at all levels.
4. Reduce the underlying risk factors.
5. Strengthen disaster preparedness for effective response at all levels.

Source: UN/ISDR for Asia and the Pacific, Bangkok.

Resources

With very small tax bases and low rates of savings, many of the least developed countries lack the resources to fund MDG-related programmes. They are therefore likely to remain dependent on external aid for the foreseeable future, looking primarily to the developed countries and multilateral institutions. The proposed regional MDG forums might incorporate regional donor forums to exchange information and data.

To maximize the impact of external resources on achieving the MDGs, donors will need to pay greater attention to local conditions. The countries and the donors have to work together to create increased capacity for absorbing resources for using in the MDG areas. At the same time, both donors and recipients need to channel new resources to support policies that reduce non-income poverty – particularly in least developed countries, landlocked developing countries and small island developing states.

This regional partnership can also be a powerful instrument for gaining additional resources from the private sector. This could, for example, involve more co-financing between ADB and the private sector for infrastructure projects, such as rural roads and urban water and sanitation projects.

For their parts, the receiving countries need to have a sense of 'ownership' of donor-supported programmes and ensure accountability and transparency in using external resources for the stated purposes. They also have to develop the necessary skills and capacity, so that their national and local institutions fit the needs and aspirations of their citizens and they can better fulfil their commitments to the Millennium Declaration.

Beyond development assistance, the developing countries should also be able to benefit from increased trade, investment and other financial flows,

while also exploring the opportunities for South-South cooperation. The partnership should therefore also be aiming to ensure easier market access for goods from the LDCs especially agricultural exports.

For the longer term, governments will be looking to macroeconomic and sectoral strategies and policies to promote pro-MDG growth. But in some areas, these policies may be complemented by interventions in critical and urgent areas where small financial outlays can yield big results. One example would be combatting vector-borne diseases by developing the necessary infrastructure and buildings – interventions that can provide immediate assistance to people in greatest need, while also establishing a sound basis for longer term programmes. Other areas where such interventions may be needed could include climate change actions, food security, water security and energy security. Many of these are strategies to the achievement of MDGs but could have cross border implications.

These initiatives will depend on the availability of resources, both internal and external. One significant recent step in this direction has been the creation of the UNDP-Spanish Millennium Development Goal Achievement Fund (MDG-F) which helps countries to undertake national level activities in key MDG areas. Seven ESCAP countries are eligible to apply – Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Cambodia, China, Philippines, Timor-Leste, and Viet Nam. But given the scale of the needs and the required resources the countries of the region will need further innovation to be able to finance need-based initiatives that take into account the characteristics of different subregions and add value to country-level efforts.

The partnership will work with governments in consultation with civil society and community groups that can help identify beneficiaries and monitor the transfer of benefits. Initiatives would be selected on the basis of demonstrable

demand, the potential for showing clear results, and replicability and adaptability. Priority would be given to LDC, LLDC and SIDS 'off-track' countries and to those critical MDGs in which the region or sub-regions appear to be faltering. Thus, in South Asia, one of the priorities would be child malnutrition, while in the Pacific, it might be youth unemployment or non-communicable diseases. But whatever the issue, the initiative would be looking for ways to promote women's empowerment and gender equality.

Value-added initiatives at subregional level, as far as possible, need to take advantage of specialized funds and programmes of the United Nations. WHO, for instance, would be a partner for health activities, UNIFEM in the area of empowerment and gender equality. UNESCO for education, UNICEF in projects relating to child and maternal health, ILO on the provision of 'decent work' and UNEP for environmental programmes.

These goal-specific interventions can help develop models of partnerships for MDG projects that can be up-scaled by member countries, while also encouraging public sector agencies to work with the private sector, establishing the basis for larger public-private partnerships.

Delivering as one

Across the Asia-Pacific region, the United Nations and other organizations need to work more closely together. When offering resources and expertise in support of national efforts to achieve

the MDGs, they should aim to 'deliver as one'. This not only simplifies the task of overstretched national administrators it also avoids overlap and makes international support more coherent and effective.

To cooperate in this way, and to monitor progress and policies, organizations can take advantage of two existing mechanisms. The first is the United Nations Regional Coordination Mechanism (RCM). The RCM enables United Nations organizations to reach a consensus and identify opportunities for regional intergovernmental cooperation – and explore ways in which the United Nations system can support this process, taking into account the links between national and regional actions and the interactions between humanitarian, security and development issues. For this purpose, the RCM also has Thematic Working Groups which can examine the implications for the MDGs on key regional issues.

A second cooperation mechanism is the ESCAP Commission. This intergovernmental forum is a place where member countries and international agencies can come together to compare experiences and engage in policy dialogue on the MDGs. The Commission can also be used by United Nations family to showcase MDG achievements.

This type of coordinated approach becomes ever more urgent as the countries of the region approach the target year of 2015. The Asia-Pacific region still has a lengthy and urgent MDG agenda, and time is running out.

Annex 1 – Tables for gap analysis

Annex table 1.1 – MDG elasticity of indicators

MDG Target	Elasticity of macroeconomic indicators				Elasticity population & employment indicators				Elasticity of communication indicators	Elasticity of agriculture indicators		
	GDP per capita (constant 2000 US \$)	Trade (% of GDP)	Government final consumption expenditure (% of GDP)	Share of agriculture (value added)	Total population	Share of female population	Share of urban population	Age dependency ratio	Television sets (per 1,000 people)	Food production index (1999-2001 = 100)	Livestock production index (1999-2001 = 100)	Food price index/Consumer price index (2000 = 100)
1 1	Population below \$1 (PPP) per day consumption percentage	-0.858 ^a	-0.674 ^a	-0.730 ^b	0.097			1.482 ^b				
1 1	Poverty gap ratio	-0.781 ^a	-0.776 ^a	-0.456				1.234 ^b				
1 2	Population undernourished, percentage	-0.493 ^a					-0.453 ^c		0.971 ^c	-1.250 ^a	1.167	
2 3	Net enrolment ratio in primary education, both sexes	0.054 ^a	0.042 ^a	-0.039 ^b	0.024 ^b	0.757 ^c						
2 3	Primary completion rate, both sexes	0.049 ^c	0.117 ^b									
3 4	Gender Parity Index in primary level enrolment	0.023 ^a	0.031 ^b	0.026								
3 4	Gender Parity Index in secondary level enrolment	0.056 ^a	0.089 ^a									
3 4	Gender Parity Index in tertiary level enrolment	0.109 ^b	0.148 ^b	0.422 ^a	-0.039	5.504 ^a						
4 5	Children under-5 mortality rate per 1,000 live births	-0.430 ^a	-0.17 ^a		-0.052				-0.071 ^b			
4 5	Infant mortality rate (0-1 year) per 1,000 live births	-0.462 ^a	-0.155 ^a		-0.063 ^c			0.905 ^a				
5 6	Maternal mortality ratio per 100,000 live births	-0.304 ^a	-0.324 ^b	-0.407 ^b			-0.422 ^c		-0.371 ^a			

Note: a,b,c indicate significant at 1%, 5% and 10% respectively

Annex table 1.2 – MDG gaps, poverty and school enrolment and completion

		Total number of countries considered	Countries with MDG gap	Countries with MDG gap						
				0-5%	5-10%	10-15%	15-20%	20-25%	25-30%	30-35%
Goal 1 Target 1	Population below \$1(PPP) per day consumption	25	17	8	4	3	1			1
Goal 1 Target 1	Poverty gap ratio	25	18	17	1					
Goal 1 Target 2	Population undernourished, percentage	22	19	11	8					
Goal 2 Target 3	Net enrolment ratio in primary education, both sexes	18	18	6	4	4	2	2		
Goal 2 Target 3	Primary completion rate, both sexes	18	15	3	4	3	1		4	

Annex table 1.3 – MDG gaps, gender parity

		Total number of countries	Countries with MDG gap	Countries with MDG gap		
				0 – 0.1	0.1 – 0.2	> 0.2
Goal 3 Target 4	Gender Parity Index in primary level enrolment	29	23	8	14	1
Goal 3 Target 4	Gender Parity Index in secondary level enrolment	29	17	2	8	7
Goal 3 Target 4	Gender Parity Index in tertiary level enrolment	29	18	2	3	13

Annex table 1.4 – MDG gaps, child and maternal mortality

		Total number of countries	Countries with MDG gap	Countries with MDG gap		
				0 – 30	30 – 100	> 100
Goal 4 Target 5	Maternal mortality ratio per 100,000 live births	30	27	5	10	12
Goal 4 Target 5	Children under-5 mortality rate per 1,000 live births	30	30	12	17	1
Goal 4 Target 5	Infant mortality rate (0-1 year) per 1,000 live births	30	30	17	12	1

Annex table 1.5 – Per capita GDP growth gap to achieve MDG targets

		Total number of countries	Countries with growth gap	Countries with growth gap 0-1%	Countries with growth gap 1-2%	Countries with positive GDP Growth gap			
						2-3%	3-4%	4-5%	> 5%
Goal 1 Target 1	Population below \$1 (PPP) per day consumption	25	17	1	2	4	2		8
Goal 1 Target 1	Poverty gap ratio	25	18	1	2	4	1	3	7
Goal 1 Target 2	Population undernourished, percentage	22	19		1	1	2	1	14
Goal 2 Target 3	Net enrolment ratio in primary education, both sexes	18	18	1	1			1	15
Goal 2 Target 3	Primary completion rate, both sexes	18	15	1		1			13
Goal 3 Target 4	Gender Parity Index in primary level enrolment	29	23	1		3	1	2	16
Goal 3 Target 4	Gender Parity Index in secondary level enrolment	29	17	1	1	1		1	13
Goal 3 Target 4	Gender Parity Index in tertiary level enrolment	29	18						18
Goal 4 Target 5	Maternal mortality ratio per 100,000 live births	30	27						27
Goal 4 Target 5	Children under five mortality rate per 1,000 live births	30	30			1	1		28
Goal 4 Target 5	Mortality rate (0-1 year) per 1,000 live births	30	30			1	1		28

Annex 2 – PRSP and MDG reports consulted for the study

Afghanistan

May 2006
Mar 2006
Mar 2006
Mar 2004
Sept 2005

PRSP and MDG Reports

Joint Staff Advisory Note (JSAN) of PRSP
Interim Poverty Reduction Strategy
Interim Poverty Reduction Strategy (Summary Report)
Afghanistan MDG Report
Afghanistan Second MDG Report

Bangladesh

Dec 2005
Oct 2005
Jun 2003
Mar 2003
Feb 2005

PRSP and MDG Reports

Joint Staff Advisory Note (JSAN) of PRSP
Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (PRSP)
Joint Staff Assessment (JSA) of I-PRSP
Interim Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (I-PRSP)
Bangladesh MDG Report

Cambodia

Jun 2006
Dec 2005
Aug 2004
Aug 2004
Jan 2003
Dec 2002
Jan 2002
Dec 2001
Dec 2000
Oct 2000
Nov 2003

PRSP and MDG Reports

Joint Staff Advisory Note (JSAN) of PRSP
Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (PRSP)
Joint Staff Assessment (JSA) of PRSP Progress Report
PRSP Progress Report
Joint Staff Assessment (JSA) of PRSP
Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (PRSP)
Joint Staff Assessment (JSA) of PRSP Preparation Status Report
PRSP Preparation Status Report
Joint Staff Assessment (JSA) of I-PRSP
Interim Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (I-PRSP)
Cambodian tailored MDG Report

Lao P.D.R.

Dec 2004
Jun 2004
Aug 2003
Jul 2003
Jul 2002
May 2002
Apr 2001
Mar 2001
Jan 2004

PRSP and MDG Reports

Joint Staff Advisory Note (JSAN) for PRSP
Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (PRSP)
Joint Staff Assessment (JSA) of PRSP Preparation Status Report
PRSP Preparation Status Report
Joint Staff Assessment (JSA) of PRSP Preparation Status Report
PRSP Preparation Status Report
Joint Staff Assessment (JSA) of I-PRSP
Interim Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (I-PRSP)
Lao PDR MDG Report

Maldives

Sept 2005

MDG Reports

Maldives MDG Report

Mongolia

Nov 2005
Sep 2005
Oct 2004
Aug 2003
Jul 2003
Sep 2001
Jun 2001

PRSP and MDG Reports

PRSP Progress Report
Joint Staff Advisory Note (JSAN) of PRSP
Mongolia MDG Reports
Joint Staff Assessment (JSA) of PRSP
Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (PRSP)
Joint Staff Assessment (JSA) of I-PRSP
Interim Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (I-PRSP)

Myanmar

2005

MDG Report

Myanmar MDG Report

Nepal

Nov 2006
Jun 2006
Jun 2005
Oct 2003
May 2003
Sept 2005

PRSP and MDG Reports

Joint Staff Advisory Note on the PRSP – Annual Progress Report
PRSP Progress
PRSP Progress Report
Joint Staff Assessment (JSA) of PRSP
Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (PRSP)
Nepal MDG Progress Report 2005

(Continued)

(continued)

Pakistan

Feb 2004
Dec 2003
Jan 2003
Jan 2003
Nov 2001
Nov 2001
Feb 2005

PRSP and MDG Reports

Joint Staff Assessment (JSA) of PRSP
Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (PRSP)
Joint Staff Assessment (JSA) of PRSP Preparation Status Report
PRSP Preparation Status Report
Joint Staff Assessment (JSA) of I-PRSP
Interim Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (I-PRSP)
Pakistan MDG Report

Papua New Guinea

Jan 2005

MDG Reports

Papua New Guinea MDG Report

Thailand

June 2004

MDG Reports

Thailand MDG Report

Timor-Leste

April 2005
July 2005
May 2002
June 2003

PRSP and MDG Reports

Joint Staff Advisory Note (JSAN) of PRSP
Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper
Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (PRSP)
Timor-Leste MDG Report

Annex 3 – Policy variables

List of variables used in the study

Policy Area	Variables
1. Macro	a) GDP growth (annual %)
2. Fiscal	a) Tax revenue (as a % of GDP) b) Education expenditure (% of GNI) c) Expenditure per student, primary (as % of GDP per capita) d) Health expenditure, total (% of GDP) e) Direct tax (% of total tax)
3. Financial	a) Liquid liabilities (M3) as % of GDP b) Domestic credit provided by the banking sector (as % of GDP) c) Bank branches (per 100,000 people)
4. Trade	a) Trade restrictiveness index, collected from Kee, et.al (2005) and estimated based on tariff and non-tariff barriers and other restrictions. b) Exports of goods and services (as % of GDP)
5. Business	a) Business disclosure index (0=less disclosure, 7=more disclosure). Based on savings b) Policy uncertainty (% of managers surveyed ranking this area as a major business constraint) c) Rigidity of employment (0=less rigid, 100=more rigid). Based on savings d) Business start up time (days)
6. Health	a) Expenditure on health to GDP b) Immunization, DPT (% of children ages 12-23 months) c) Immunization, Measles (% of children ages 12-23 months)
7. Education	a) Education expenditure (% of GNI) b) Expenditure per student, primary (as % of GDP per capita)

Annex table 3.1 – Economic indicators for selected Asia-Pacific economies (percentage)

Indicators	Bangladesh	Cambodia	China	Lao PDR	Mongolia	Nepal	Pakistan	Thailand	India	Bhutan
GDP growth (%)	5.2	6.3	9.4	6.0	5.2	2.5	4.1	5.4	6.0	6.6
Tax/GDP (%)	7.8	6.4	7.6		21.6	9.1	11.0	15.4	9.1	8.2
M3/GDP (%)	36.5	15.5	165.7	17.2	33.0	41.8	44.0	114.9	60.1	47.2
Export/GDP (%)	14.2	42.1	27.4	29.7	35.0	20.7	17.8	64.3	14.7	25.4
Exp. on Education/GDP (%)	1.3	1.8	2.0	1.8	5.0	3.2	2.3	3.6	4.0	4.0
Exp. Primary (% of GDPPC)	8.6	6.2		8.5	20.3	12.1		17.4	12.4	
Exp. Health/GDP (%)	3.2	9.6	5.6	3.0	6.4	4.9	3.3	3.8	5.0	4.1
Direct tax/ Total tax (%)	16.1		9.5		28.2	19.9	28.5	36.4	28.9	55.3
Trade restrictiveness index	0.8		0.9	0.9		0.8	0.8	0.9	0.8	0.8
IT Exp/GDP (%)	2.3		4.7				6.8	3.6	3.7	
Financial inclusion	37.2	6.5	149.1	11.7	18.3	42.1	39.6	121.1	55.6	8.1
Immunization (DPT)	83.4	56.4	89.6	50.8	96.0	73.4	63.8	96.4	62.5	89.7
Customs	11.5		7.9				17.1	4.6	6.7	
Bank Branches	4.5		1.3			1.7	4.7	7.2	6.3	
Business disclosure index	3.0	0.0	4.0	1.0	3.0	3.0	4.0	6.0	4.0	1.0
Immunization (measles)	76.6	64.2	84.0	45.0	95.0	72.2	60.8	94.8	56.0	81.4
Policy uncertainty	45.4	40.1	32.9				40.1	29.1	20.9	
Employment rigidity	24.0	48.0	30.0	50.0	37.0	44.0	49.0	42.0	48.0	49.0
Business start up time (days)	8.0	11.0	13.0	9.0	8.5	7.0	11.0	8.0	10.5	11.0

Note: Exp.: Expenditure

Annex Table 3.1 Economic indicators for selected Asia-Pacific economies (percentage) (continued)

<i>Indicators</i>	<i>Maldives</i>	<i>Sri Lanka</i>	<i>Fiji</i>	<i>Indonesia</i>	<i>Kazakhstan</i>	<i>Republic of Korea</i>	<i>Malaysia</i>	<i>Myanmar</i>	<i>Papua New Guinea</i>
GDP growth (%)	6.9	4.0	3.0	4.0	9.1	6.1	5.4	11.5	1.4
Tax/GDP (%)	14.4	14.5	23.0	12.7	11.3	15.2	16.7	2.7	22.4
M3/GDP (%)	47.8	48.4	42.7	50.2	19.0	87.4	127.8	30.2	30.9
Export/GDP (%)	56.4	36.7	64.3	34.7	49.4	39.2	113.0	0.4	64.0
Exp. on Education/GDP (%)	3.0	2.6	4.6	1.2	4.4	3.7	4.9	0.8	
Exp. Primary (% of GDPPC)			18.5	3.3	11.1	17.1	16.7		
Exp. Health/GDP (%)	5.9	3.6	3.8	2.9	3.8	5.2	3.5	2.3	3.5
Direct tax/Total tax (%)	4.2	16.5	31.9	50.2	36.0	36.2	60.8	36.4	54.5
Trade restrictiveness index		0.9		0.9			0.9		0.9
IT Exp/GDP (%)		5.4		2.8		6.6	6.9		
Financial inclusion	38.2	42.8	36.7	54.4	13.1	97.6	155.8	31.3	25.9
Immunization (DPT)	97.3	98.5	87.2	72.5	94.5	94.0	96.0	78.2	51.2
Customs		4.1		5.8	5.3		3.7		
Bank branches		6.9	5.5	8.4	2.5	13.4	9.8		1.6
Business disclosure index	1.0	4.0	1.0	4.0	5.0	6.0	5.0		4.0
Immunization (measles)	98.0	98.4	83.2	71.6	97.6	96.8	91.8	77.6	53.2
Policy uncertainty		34.0		48.2	18.5		22.4		
Employment rigidity		40.0	21.0	57.0	27.0	34.0			17.0
Business start up time (days)	6.0	8.0	7.0	12.0	9.0		9.0		8.0

Annex Table 3.1 Economic indicators for some selected Asia-Pacific economies (percentage) (continued)

<i>Indicators</i>	<i>Philippines</i>	<i>Russian Federation</i>	<i>Singapore</i>	<i>Samoa</i>	<i>Solomon Islands</i>	<i>Vanuatu</i>	<i>Viet Nam</i>	<i>Tonga</i>
GDP growth (%)	4.2	6.8	4.6	3.1	-2.5	-0.4	6.8	3.2
Tax/GDP (%)	13.2	13.5	14.2			18.3		
M3/GDP (%)	64.0	25.7	117.3	38.4	30.2	103.7	52.9	45.8
Export/GDP (%)	51.2	38.3		31.8	41.2	43.6	56.9	12.9
Exp. on Education/GDP (%)	3.0	3.5	2.7	4.0	3.8	6.5	2.8	3.9
Exp. Primary (% of GDPPC)	11.8			9.9		12.1		12.7
Exp. Health/GDP (%)	3.3	5.7	4.2	5.9	4.9	4.0	5.2	6.8
Direct tax/Total tax (%)	45.0	10.1	48.8					
Trade restrictiveness index	1.0							
IT Exp/GDP (%)	5.5	3.6	9.8					
Financial inclusion	63.6	27.3	90.5	23.1	36.3	42.9	43.1	54.8
Immunization (DPT)	79.7	96.2	95.3	91.3	78.8	70.8	92.5	95.0
Customs	9.1	6.9						
Bank branches	7.8	2.2	9.1					
Business disclosure index	6.0	3.0	5.0	1.0	1.0	1.0	1.0	1.0
Immunization (measles)	80.2	97.4	93.8	81.6	74.8	65.6	96.2	95.2
Policy uncertainty	29.5	31.5						
Employment rigidity	41.0	27.0	0.0		21.0	21.0	51.0	
Business start up time (days)	11.0	10.5	7.0	7.0	5.0	7.0	11.5	4.0

Annex table 3.2 – Benchmark values of the indicators (percentage)

<i>Indicators</i>	<i>Benchmark: China</i>	<i>Benchmark: Thailand</i>
GDP	9.4	
Tax to GDP		15.4
Direct tax to total tax		36
Export to GDP ratio	27	
Expenditure on health to GDP	6.0	
Expenditure on education to GDP ratio		3.6
Credit/GDP		120
M3/GDP		115
IT Exp/GDP	4.7	
Credit/GDP	149.1	
Immunization (DPT)		96.4
Customs clearances (in days)	7.9	
Bank branches (per 100,000 population)		7.2
Immunization (measles)		94.8
Policy uncertainty		29.1
Rigidity of employment	30	
Business start-up time (in days)		8
Expenditure per student, primary (%of GDP per capita)		17.4
Trade restrictiveness index		0.9
Business disclosure index		6.0

Annex 4 – Methodology to estimate MDG resource gap

The methodology adopted in computing the MDG resource gap for Least Developed Countries (LDCs) in Asia-Pacific is as follows:

Step I

First, the total MDG resource requirement (averaged over requirements in 2005 and 2015) is computed according to the rule:

$$\text{Total annual MDG Resource Requirement} = I_{MDG} = \frac{1}{nT} \sum_{t=1}^T P_{LDC,t} \sum_{i=1}^n I_{MDG(PC),i,t}$$

Where $I_{MDG(PC),i,t}$ is the MDG investment requirement per capita for country i in period t ($i = 1 \dots n$, $t = 1 \dots T$). n is the number of countries for which country level MDG investment requirements are available. $P_{LDC,t}$ is the population in LDCs at time t .

Step II

Second, total MDG related actual expenditure in the immediate past (2005) for the LDCs is assumed to reflect total resources available for achieving MDGs in this group of countries in the region. Accordingly, the total MDG related expenditure is calculated according to the following formula:

$$\text{Total annual MDG related expenditure} = E_{MDG} = \frac{P_{LDC}}{P_s} \sum_{i=1}^N X_i$$

Where X_i is the sum of MDG related expenditure in country i ($i = 1 \dots N$). P_{LDC} is the population in all LDCs in the region whereas P_s is the population in the sample countries for which related expenditure is available.

Step III

The MDG resource Gap is then defined as:

$$\text{MDG Resource Gap} = I_{MDG} - E_{MDG}$$

Data

In the calculation of I_{MDG} , the following data is used.

$n = 6$ (to represent 6 countries namely Bangladesh, Bhutan, Cambodia, Mongolia, Nepal and Tajikistan in the sample for which MDG costing data is available).

$T = 2$ ($t = 1$ to represent period 1 (2005)

$t = 2$ to represent period 2 (2015)

In the calculation of E_{MDG} , the following information is used

$N = 7$ (to represent Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, Maldives, Myanmar, Nepal, and Vanuatu for which data on MDG related expenditure are available).

X_i , the sum of MDG related expenditure in country i , is defined as:

$$X_i = X_{eco,i} + X_{env,i} + X_{hou,i} + X_{hea,i} + X_{edu,i} + X_{soc,i}$$

Where $X_{eco,i}$ is government expenditure on economic affairs in country i . This includes expenditures on agriculture, energy, manufacturing and construction, transportation and communication. Similarly, $X_{env,i}$, $X_{hou,i}$, $X_{hea,i}$, $X_{edu,i}$, $X_{soc,i}$ are government expenditure on environment, housing, health, education (excluding tertiary education), and social protection respectively in country i . Data for year 2005 (or the latest) from the IMF's international Financial Statistics is used to compute X_i . For those countries which did not have data for 2005, the latest data were used to estimate data for 2005 using nominal GDP growth with the assumption that MDG related expenditure would grow each year at the same rate as nominal GDP.

References

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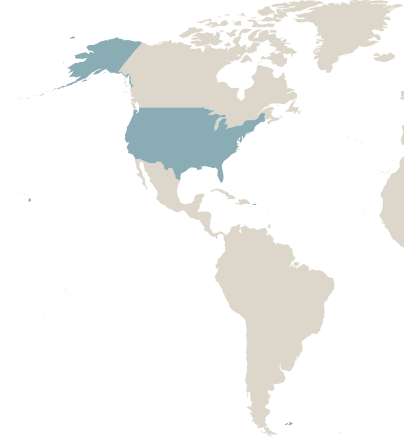
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United Nations publication
Sales No. E.08.II.F.15
Copyright © United Nations 2008
ISBN: 978-92-1-120547-3
ST/ESCAP/2501

Printed in Bangkok
April 2008 – 2,110





MDGs



"We will spare no effort to free our fellow men, women and children from the abject and dehumanizing conditions of extreme poverty, to which more than a billion of them are currently subjected. We are committed to making the right to development a reality for everyone and to freeing the entire human race from want."



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